

The Virtual Reality of Personal Diaspora

Imagining the ninth ethnographic moment through the experience of an Israeli expatriate

By: □ Niva Ashkenazi

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University of Washington Seattle, Washington, USA

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Section 1: an introduction to introductions

Unpacking and dissecting an entire discipline to its tiniest details can never be an easy or delicate process, and is bound to open one to parts of the self which have never been visible before. Starting at the very beginning of the 20th century the nine ethnographic moments of ethnographic history began with the “Traditional Period”, “Golden Age”, “Blurred Genres”, “Crisis of Representation”, “Postmodernist Era”, “Post-Experimental Inquiry”, and “The Present”. If the seventh moment was the last one, and we are now in the eighth moment, what would we do in the ninth? Since we are only capable of inhabiting the present, the future can only be introduced, never fully drawn out; only exposing its beginning and inviting anthropologists to navigate through

it as they pass from one moment to the next. Only after a significant number of moments have passed do those ancient moments become crystallized and their uniqueness from the past becomes more clear. Such an imagination of the future was the majority of the culminating work I did for this paper, in which I will delve deeper to conceptualize the ninth moment through my own life experience.

If the redefinition of anthropology has to be introduced to us, it must be done so through our experience of it. The writing process for this course was, then, rooted in that experience (what we called the ‘repertoire’), not in the archives of past works written by past academics. Instead, as a student of anthropology in the eighth moment, I became acquainted with the value that my credibility ought to lie in my own embodied knowledge, rather than in the names I am prompted to include at the ends of sentences in order for my work to be considered credible. These new values of experience and embodied wisdom directly affected the work I produced at the end of the course. Therefore, much more of this paper is carried through the experiences that I have had throughout my life, and most importantly within the context of the last three months. What lies at the core of this paper are not the sources I have read to gain insight, but parts of myself I had to unpack in order to understand the greater meaning and the possible future of Anthropology. Although I will be referencing various essays, articles, and books throughout this

piece, my personal history is where I find the most meaning.

Part of the work in this course required me to identify a “site” and enter it; whether it be a social setting, organization, cultural phenomenon, or an individual human experience. I was then asked to *pay attention* to it: be in dialogue with it by asking questions, engaging in thoughtful participation and observation, and articulating the critical dynamics that drove both the ethnographic encounter and the site itself. The intention was that students might create an active research project around it, and use that project to envision the ninth ethnographic moment. The site I chose was metaphysical, and may be a significant factor in the lives of other immigrants also living as expatriates. I moved to the US from Israel in 2006, when I was nine years old. After spending over half of my life as an immigrant, my feelings of detachment from home have only intensified. Therefore, my site is not only Israel itself, but also how I carry it with me when I am not there, and how it guides me through life. I now also feel a reaction to that detachment: a desperate effort to compensate for it in metaphysical ways. As a Jewish child born after the establishment of the state of Israel, I am always prompted to remember that intense longing for home which my people felt during their two thousand years lived in diaspora. This is how my site entices me to view my experiences: as a diasporic one. As I continue to live my daily life in the United States, I am propelled to think about Israel at least once a

day, in one way or another. This is the first characteristic of my site: a personal diaspora. The second characteristic of my site describes how I witness this diasporic longing both physically and mentally.

Because my body is detached from its origin, my current life is not only separated, but is virtual as well, in the sense that all of my experiences of Israel must be fabricated. I am hailed by my site to seek other mediums through which I can preserve and express what I lost. I tend to do so by way of films, academic courses, or the personal stories of family members. This process became specifically known to me when I learned about the First Lebanon War of 1982 through those three unique sources (the foundations of what I later refer to as my “three-pronged knowledge”). However, by “virtual” I do not simply mean a type of cinematic phenomenon. My experience much more matches that of a video game, navigating through a constantly changing universe and - as I am also an agent within it - affecting it through my actions. Thus, my site is made up of all the deliberate virtual realities I create for myself in order to maintain contact with my national identity.

In this paper I will use the discussion of my site to inform how I imagine the ninth moment. In order to effectively predict a better future, we must first understand the faults of the past. Therefore I begin my analysis in Section 2 with a discussion of the seven previous ethnographic

moments, including the present eighth. I return to my site in Section 3 by describing how its discovery led to my understanding of what the future of anthropology might look like. I frame that future by unpacking my newly formed “three pronged” knowledge of the Lebanon war of 1982. I will focus more intimately on the ninth moment in Section 4 by using the film I analyze in Section 3 - *Waltz With Bashir* - to understand why the future of Anthropology may already exist in the present but is simply situated in other fields of study. The documentary also informed the decisions I made during the creative process to physically visualize the ninth moment through the production of a short film. I discuss my film in detail in Section 5 by describing how it is fundamentally the sum of all the previous sections of this paper. I conclude by identifying possible inconsistencies within my work to consider how it can improve in the future. Through these final thoughts I hope to understand what my site causes me to overlook, those things which are most likely crucial for the transfer of Anthropology from this eighth moment to the ninth.

Section 2: A History of the Ethnographic Moments

Our class discussion of ethnographic history stemmed from the work of Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln in the introduction of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. The majority of scholarships written on this topic are scarce, and none outline ethnography into distinct and

concise moments quite like Denzin and Lincoln. My discussion of the seven moments in this paper is thus dependent on this piece, but it also incorporates details of the collective discourse about each moment that my colleagues and I engaged in throughout the course. The experiential dialogue we had with the history of our own discipline becomes especially vital in the later moments, when Denzin and Lincoln's analysis tapers off into an abrupt conclusion. This is where the scholarship was insufficient, and as participants in this discipline we could only progress through discussion.

The first ethnographic moment - named the "Traditional Period" - emerged with the start of the 20th century and ended right before World War II (Denzin and Lincoln, 12). Our class critically understood the source of ethnography as the "twin of formal colonization", thus pushing its beginning back to the birth of early colonization. Both colonizing and ethnographic practices were fueled by a desire to move, touch, and be in far away places in the world, while at the same time also informed by the urge to dominate "Others". The turn of the century then can be seen at the point in history when anthropology officially turned colonization into a scientific venture. No longer was the colonizer simply writing journal entries to document their experiences in unknown lands, they were directly using those documentations to establish a concrete understanding of the human race. These supposedly "objective"

colonizing accounts of encounters in the field informed the new dominant positivist paradigm of scientific understanding, and desperately sought out an undeniable truth about humanity (Denzin and Lincoln, 12). This was the period of the “lone ethnographer”, venturing out into the unfamiliar world, collecting accounts later used as data. They obsessively searched for valid, reliable, interpretive writings that would contribute to a wider colonizing scholarship dedicated to understanding the strange, foreign, native “Other”. In sum, the work of the Traditional Period was sustained by four major concepts: objectivism, imperialism, monumentalism, and timelessness.

With the end of the Second World War came the “Golden Age” of ethnography, stretching over 20 years, from 1950-1970 (Denzin and Lincoln, 13). This moment was particularly revolutionary because of the concepts it introduced: post-positivism, romantics, cultural relativism, and so on. For example, relativism was a direct response to ethnocentrism, the tendency of Traditional ethnographers, who used their work to criticize non-European cultures by documenting details, singling out traits, and using those intricate parts to order humanity into a social-Darwinistic hierarchy (with Europe always at the top). The commitment to objectivism eventually became unstable, as the credibility of those objectivist authors was questioned. Thus culture was also redefined from a timeless, monolithic piece of history to something

that is dynamic and constantly affected by global forces (Denzin and Lincoln, 13).

The years between 1970 and 1986 brought about the third moment of “Blurred Genres”. This “blurring” effect referred to the combination of the social sciences with other disciplines, most importantly the humanities. The persona of the researcher was now that of a “bricoleur”, one who incorporates multidisciplinary elements to the work, replacing the essay as more of an art form rather than a scientific article (Denzin and Lincoln, 15). Post-positivist notions were still dominant, but were also mixed with the introduction of new concepts directly suggesting new methodologies into the practice of ethnography. Claude Lévi-Strauss’s “Grounded Theory” suggested the possibility of ethnography as an ephemeral discipline that is constantly re-shaped by the informants who guide anthropologists through their work (Denzin and Lincoln, 14). Thereby creating theories out of each new experience, rather than assigning previous notions from old theories onto them. Each new personal account worked to bring about a new way of understanding the greater human condition. Clifford Geertz’s “Thick Description” re-imagined ethnographic accounts as the sum of all the layers of external and previous interpretations of a unifying circumstance. Ethnographic research thus becomes “thicker” as each new voice is added, as more details are considered, and as both are

included in each ethnographer's retrospective analyses. A thick description is one which does not take anything for granted, considers every detail of an experience seriously, and contemplates the ontological importance of things in personal, local, and particular contexts.

The high-modernist attitude introduced in the third moment quickly disrupted the fourth: the post modernist "Crisis of Representation" from 1986 to 1990, which sought new models of truth, method, and representation (Denzin and Lincoln, 16). The anthropologists who brought this moment forth particularly grappled with the ethical complications that occur when a privileged social scientist attempts to accurately represent a usually underprivileged and unempowered informant who is still "othered" in the descriptions that result from research. The new perspectives established from these theorists of the late 20th century naturally contradicted those of the past. Now the values of credibility through objectivism, complicity with colonialist ideals, and the conceptualization of life structure through static monuments which have so far been abandoned were officially made problematic. Thus bringing in a new imperative imposed onto the ethnographer to constantly consider the ethical complexities involved in their work. Edward Said encapsulates this new anthropological dilemma in his address to the American Anthropological Association in 1989, claiming that "to represent someone... has now become an endeavor as complex

and as problematic as an asymptote, with consequences for certainty and decidability as fraught with difficulties as can be imagined” (Said, 206). As of this moment, providing a completely accurate representation of another (especially when only one source or voice is used) will never be an achievable goal. A skilled and ethically aware anthropologist may one day come close to it, but will never achieve it fully as more voices are inevitably incorporated into discussions, and human history continues to shape human culture.

Denzin and Lincoln describe the fifth moment between 1990 and 1995 as a “Postmodern Period” in which experimental ethnographers struggled through a previous crisis now expanded threefold: representation, legitimation, and praxis (Denzin and Lincoln, 17). Our class discussion brought up different (and seemingly contradictory) details, particularly that this era directly challenged the ethics of post-modernist views, bringing about a sort of post-post-modernist theory. The cultural-relativist ethnographer who was overly concerned with reserving criticism of cultures not belonging to one’s own was now invited to conduct more “activist-oriented” research. In *Death Without Weeping*, Nancy Scheper-Hughes describes the consequences of remaining silent in the face of injustice in the field, “If anthropologists deny themselves the power... to identify... a wrong and choose to ignore... the extent to which dominated people sometimes play the role

of their own executioners, they collaborate with the relations of power and silence that allow the destruction to continue” (Scheper-Hughes, 172). The anthropologist takes the role of the oppressor when they ignore their privileged presence in the field and abstain from any action which might ‘taint’ the authenticity of the ethnographic experience. Truth-telling becomes vulnerable when it is embroiled in power dynamics, but it was then the ethical duty of the ethnographer to bring that vulnerability to the center of their work.

The work of Denzin and Lincoln were written while the effects of the sixth moment were still becoming established, therefore their discussion of it is limited. It is defined as the moment of “Postexperimental Theory”, between 1995 and 2000 (Denzin and Lincoln, 17). Continuing the legacy of anthropologists like Scheper-Hughes, students of the fifth moment sought to connect their writings to the needs of a free and democratic society in specifically local contexts. Exploration of the demands for a moral and sacred qualitative science was accompanied by the use of multimedia texts, fictional ethnographies, and other unconventional works which furthered the blurred boundary between social sciences and the humanities. The distorted idea of postmodern “Truth” now became newly crystallized by the feminist and indigenous anthropologists whose voices were finally included in the academic

community.

The incorporation of new voices into anthropological scholarship initiated the “flipping of the gaze”. Scholars whose ancestors have long been the subjects of these studies were by then able to provide their own indigenous paradigms, countering hegemonic research conventions put in place since the first moments, which have informed every consecutive moment until now. Denzin and Lincoln call this seventh moment “The Future” of 2000-2011 but this term is no longer accurate in 2017, six years into the new eighth moment.

The current moment in which anthropologists find themselves today is driven by the new sub-discipline of autoethnography. If truth becomes vulnerable when in contact with power, what happens when that truth is of your own home? The work of this moment is much more inwardly focused, committed to providing representations of the ‘Other’ written *for* the ‘Other’, and authored *by* that same ‘Other’. In this post-colonial moment formerly colonized anthropologists are reclaiming representations of home, interrupting the legitimacy of oppression, and connecting the personal and cultural to the political. In order to understand the Other, the ethnographer must first understand the Self. Everyone is home somewhere, and therefore that is where the work should start. The dynamics of my diasporic site originate from the values

that this moment puts forth, and through my amelioration of those values I hope to expose underlying roots that will help sprout the ninth moment, and guide anthropologists who follow me into the future they will shape.

Section 3: Lebanon: a three-pronged history

Because the site of my personal diaspora extends so much farther than my own experience as an individual living outside of their native country, the larger narrative which made itself known to me through the effects of my site is much more important. The history of Israel is one that is never put to rest, always memorialized, contended, debated, condemned, glorified, and grappled with. My site places me right at the intersection of all these (seemingly) contradictory narratives. I became most aware of this when I reconsidered my knowledge of the Lebanon War of 1982, now seeing it as a living piece of history. My “eighth moment self” is called to retrace my steps and figure out why it has become such a central topic in my life. After doing so, I realized all of those steps come back to my site. The site is what compelled me to take a Political Science course on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, watch the film *Waltz With Bashir* (which first came out when I was still too young to watch it, but was still aware of its cultural importance), and finally come back to the source, and ask my father about his experience in the war as a soldier himself. As I retraced my national history into my

familial one, I did not expect to arrive at an explanation for my current life. Because the personal experience is so intertwined with the political influence, I was inevitably bound to find a piece of myself in a war which occurred before I was born.

The First Lebanon War redefined the function of the Israeli Defense Forces to Israeli society as a whole. It was the first war which Israel entered out of choice, rather than a response to attacks from neighboring states. “Operation Peace for Galilee” - conceived by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon - marked the official entrance of Israel into the war (Bickerton and Klausner, 238). In this initial campaign, Israel planned to eliminate the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) forces in Southern Lebanon and create a secure area up to twenty-five miles north of the border. This was eventually achieved, but instead of concluding the operation, Sharon continued the advancement of the IDF troops North to Beirut in an effort to destroy the PLO and restore a “legitimate” Christian government run by Bashir Gemayel (with the hope that he would function as a powerful leader and secured ally for the state of Israel). This decision came as a surprise to all, including Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, whose cabinet only permitted the small scale attacks near the Israel-Lebanon border. The siege of Beirut by the IDF led to countless civilian casualties, as is usually the unfortunate consequence of urban warfare. The final events of the war brought about

the most dramatic and long lasting effects. Following the assassination of Bashir Gemayel on September 14th, 1982, Israel immediately re-entered West Beirut in a possibly counterintuitive effort to “keep the peace” (Bickerton and Klausner, 238). But the most devastating events took place in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, in which Christian Phalangist militias avenged the death of their leader through the massacre of hundreds of inhabitants; including rebels *and* civilians (women, children, and the elderly). While the Israeli military did not take an active role in the massacres, they granted the Phalangist militias permission to enter the camps, and controlled the surrounding area. This contribution to deaths at Sabra and Shatila led to the IDF’s acceptance of indirect responsibility and Sharon’s resignation from the Defense Ministership. The news of this tragedy sparked a disillusioned anti-war movement in Israel, as 400,000 people demonstrated on the streets of Tel-Aviv. A new Israeli society was then prompted to question the true intentions of its right-wing revisionist government in the wake of a new Arab-Israeli conflict. Learning about this war in an academic context allowed me to fill in the blanks of my fragmented knowledge of my nation’s history, giving me a clearer understanding of the rifts which divide different groups in Israel’s political spectrum today.

Waltz With Bashir, a documentary film directed by Ari Folman, is a direct manifestation of that modern discontent with Israel’s participation

in an unjustified war. Throughout the film, Folman (being an ex-soldier himself) shared this feeling not only with other soldiers who participated in the war, but also among civilian individuals who directly witnessed its injustices. I return to a deeper analysis of this film in Section 4, focusing on its artistic achievement and symbolic importance. The film begins with a personal anecdote of Folman's friend, in which he describes to him the neurotic quality with which he was constantly reminded of his experience as a soldier in his dreams. The dialogue they have about it sparks a flashback in Folman's own mind, but his memories seem out of place twenty years after the war has ended. Through the film he journeys through the narratives and firsthand accounts of different people, including friends who fought in his battalion, psychologists, post-trauma experts, and journalists. Each of these sources guides him to the next, until he returns to that of journalist Ron Ben-Yishai, who worked as a war correspondent at the time, and directly witnessed the effects of the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, ending the film with an image of himself, situated within the memories of someone else. The most crucial aspect of the film is the collective understanding of the war it cultivates through the inclusion of multiple voices, and it is that same collectivity which prompted me to consider the experiences of my father. As I watched the film, I could not help but see my father in the scenes which unfolded on-screen, thus Ari Folman's accounts are connected to

thousands of other moments which lead to other sets of interpersonal trajectories. In the beginning of the film, Folman struggles to understand the connection between his friend's experiences and his own, "Why did I need my friend's dream to activate my own memory? Something that is separate entirely". As I heard this quote a second time I realized that these unique stories are not so separate; they are all unified by the greater context of the war. By that same line of thought, if Folman was - hypothetically - acquainted with my father, he may have been provoked to approach my father as well to collect his accounts from the war and dwell on those which resonate with his own. Most importantly, the addition of my father's story would not have disrupted the plot, or the flow of the film precisely because it touches on and informs the same central themes. Due to the fact that this is not the case in reality, a part of my work is to carry out that bridging process between my father's and Folman's pasts myself.

Although my father's perspective of the war is quite different - especially considering he never witnessed the massacres at Sabra and Shatila himself - he still lived through the war in the same way. When he recounted his experiences to me, he provided the same insights that Folman brought to light in his film through *his* interviews with friends and informants. In our interview, he explained how his entrance into Lebanon as a tank driver instilled a cinematic feeling, as if he was only

witnessing the war, not actually living in it, making it seem unreal, “It is as if you are distancing yourself from the sites that are occurring, because those sites, too, are not something you see every day, so you suddenly enter a reality that seems ‘surreal’ ... It looks exaggerated”.

This movie-like effect functions as a protective mechanism, one that is actually used to explain Folman’s accounts in *Waltz With Bashir*.

Professor Zahava Solomon, a post-trauma expert, describes this phenomenon as an individual viewing everything through an “imaginary camera” in order to feel outside of or removed from a situation in which the individual is very physically situated. My father continued this analogy slightly differently-when he reimagined his past self as someone who was not only watching a film about the war, but also acted in its production, “I felt like an extra in a film... [as if] someone wrote me a script - I don’t even know what is written in the script - but as an extra I need to fulfill, I need to be a small cog in the system”. Through a recognition of his contribution to the war he understood how much he truly disagreed with it, even when he was in Lebanon as a nineteen-year-old soldier. He connected that feeling of mistrust in the state to his own mother’s attitudes about her political reality, how she grieved of “the idea that her sons [had] to fight in wars she did not believe in... it’s especially hard when she [believed] that the war [was] not justified all the way, and [was] not truly necessary”. Now

repositioned, he brought his line of thought back to the present in order to make sense of our family's present situation and what events and experiences led to it, "Other than having the right to choose whether or not to serve in the military... [I wanted you to] witness things in a different way... [that] allows you to see the full picture, and gives you more freedom to establish your own opinion, [so that] you don't turn into a part of a system of indoctrination". As a result of what my father witnessed, and what he was ordered to do in the war, he (and by extension, his mother) understood the unfortunate consequences of military conscription at a young age, and forced cooperation with a state whose actions cannot always be justified. Thus, when he was offered the opportunity to move to the United States, he was prompted to consider how my brother and I could live a more liberated life in which we would not be forced into unrighteous conditions.

Section 4: Imagining the Ninth Moment

When making *Waltz With Bashir*, Ari Folman utilized an unconventional style of documentary filmmaking, particularly because he placed himself so deeply within the core of the film. It is also this crucial repositioning of the Self in the Self's work which so directly defines the eighth ethnographic moment, and is therefore why I believe it houses the necessary qualities which will advance ethnography to the ninth

moment.

Although the film is completely non-fiction, it still carries a deeply cinematic feeling. Folman produced this effect by animating the entire film, including both the events of the war's past recalled by individuals in interviews and the interviews themselves, which carry the film's main plotline. This is how the story is brought forth: in reality the interviewing process was possibly very mundane (since it took place in recording studios, rather than the settings depicted in the film), but its importance extended so much farther than a collection of dialogues between two individuals, which is reflected in its presentation. This is an example of "creative nonfiction", a technique used by those within creative discipline in order to present narratives in a way which may be more engaging for audiences. Through the combination of personal accounts, the creator can construct a new story which belongs not to any one person, but an entire collective. More so, if the creator is personally invested in the story, the result of their work gains an emotional connection that is much more palpable. Folman had to tell the stories of all those who participated in the film because they struck him at the core. They moved him to such an extent that he was not only able to navigate through them and connect them to other stories, but ultimately find himself at the center of it all.

Other than providing an aesthetically pleasing dramatic effect, the animation of the intimate stories in these films also allows for a more ethically sound ethnographic work. For example, Folman initially meets with Carmi Cna'an, one of his old friends who appears in the first memory Folman has about the war. Cna'an first mentions the irony of his visit, and brings up the fact that shortly before Folman contacted him, his son approached him with questions about his life as a soldier. Folman finds this intriguing, and thus asks Cna'an if he can include an image of his son playing in the scene, to which Cna'an responds, "Sure, you can draw anything, as long as you don't take pictures". In this specific case, animation functions as a mechanism to preserve an individual's anonymity, but still use the representation of their figure to expose an essential part of the story; how the generation which fought in the war is concerned with the effects military service will have on future generations. The dignity and message of the story remains intact, while respecting the vulnerable identities of Folman's informants.

Ethnographers in the ninth moment could learn from this method, as ethical considerations can never be taken off the table now that they have been introduced into the discipline.

The film may start with a personal anecdote, but it ends with a very political statement. I believe it ought to be read as political because the audience is exposed to the effects of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. It

had to be political because the display of dead bodies of innocent civilians cannot be without a political charge. It is highly unlikely that Folman specifically chose to include these images in the film simply to show how he was struck by it. He wanted the viewer to think about the consequences of war, forced conscription, and the effect they have not only on young Israeli soldiers, but also those on the other side of the conflict, many of them Palestinian refugees. Thus, rather than being a detached member of an audience, the viewer is forced to become deeply invested in the film, taking full advantage of the medium to bring about a reaction so intense it has a visceral effect. Bell Hooks discusses this interconnectedness of personal feelings with political processes in *Talking Back*, “It is crucial that we not ignore the self nor the longing people have to transform the self, that we make the conditions for wholeness such that they are mirrored... in our own beings... ‘the personal is political’ addresses the connections between the self and political reality” (Hooks, 32). Connecting our very intimate moments - however painful that may be - to the greater political contexts that influence them may lead us to an understanding of how our general societal experiences are unified. With a collective knowledge of how the personal intersects with the political, we have the potential to advance towards a more liberated future.

The political message given at the end of the film has a personal source

situated in multiple temporalities. Questions of injustice - especially in the context of this conflict - originated from something much older than Folman's witnessing of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. In Folman's memory, he emerges from the sea and onto the beach, as he is guided towards the light of flares shot up into the sky. Ori Sivan (his friend, who also happens to be a therapist), explains to him that in dreams, the sea most often symbolizes fear, uneasiness, and deep - often paralyzing - emotions. Sivan then connected his dream to Folman's firsthand experience of the massacres, "The massacre frightens you, preoccupies you emotionally, you grappled with it. [Your] interest in the massacre stemmed from another massacre before it. You lived the massacre through [the one] lived by your [ancestors]". On the surface, it may seem that Folman felt guilty simply due to an ethical imperative forcing him to consider the standards of human rights and the complexities which arise when they are not granted to all who deserve them. But on a much deeper level, his guilt actually stemmed from his unique knowledge of history, thus leading him to implicitly empathize with the victims of the war he was a part of. He saw the massacres not through his own eyes, but through the eyes of his relatives who experienced the Holocaust firsthand. They too know the effects of social marginalization, they felt them in the ghettos. They too are familiar with that intense feeling of horror when witnessing mass executions, they felt it in the

concentration camps. Because Folman's familial history was one that he embodied throughout his life, he was also hailed by a certain force to consider how his very personal knowledge of the past must shape his present.

It may seem that, just as I influenced by my cultural history to comprehend my present situation as a "diaspora", Folman came to a point in his journey of self-discovery where his his experience no longer seemed singular. By the end, it was instead a product of a long and collective chronicle belonging to an entire group of people unified by their survival through adversity. *Waltz With Bashir* is indicative of a new praxis which brings one's ancestral life into the self, and into the work with they produce. This new visibility of our world through the knowledge of the lives of our ancestors is something I fixated upon in my consideration of the ninth moment.

Section 5: Being the Ninth Moment

If the eighth moment called for anthropologists to *do* the work rather than simply *talk about* it, the ninth moment calls for anthropologists to *be* the work, not just *do* it. As scholars for which the creative process is crucial, we are always creating as we go through life, even though we might not be doing so actively at every given moment. Therefore, the film I produced as a product of this paper is my personal attempt to

venture into and embody the ninth moment.

The interview I conducted with my father guides the flow and structure of the film, in it I asked him to once again describe to me how he participated in and witnessed the war in Lebanon. He then took initiative and decided to trace back his own family history, and try to find the source of all of the events which have led to *his* current life. The film finishes at the present, when my father combines the attitudes he came to have about the military and the state of Israel, and how even that small and implicit experience may have affected his decision to relocate our family to the United States. Due to how I designed the interview, and the shape it took in the moment, the ninth moment of ethnography is instilled within it. During the course we discussed new ways to approach various methods for research, one was a suggestion to change the way in which interviews are conducted. In the ninth moment, rather than asking strict questions, the ethnographer would “follow their breath, breathe into the dialogue, and let it touch them at the core”. I decided to utilize this new method into my work, and did so by refraining from asking specific questions. Instead, I included “catalysts” for conversations during the interview with my father to provide him with suggestions for topics to discuss. This new unbounded interview structure brought about much more enriching results, as it gave my father the freedom to talk about what he felt was truly important. By giving the informant room to

breathe and express themselves in interviews, we may be advancing towards more honest representations of others.

Other than the film in and of itself, in order to create it I had to use a combination of methods which I believe have not been used in previous moments as a collective. I had to repeatedly retrace my steps, refreshing my memory in infinitely various ways. I used techniques such as writing poetry, documenting entire descriptions of accounts and dialogues from memory, watching, re-watching, and closely analyzing film, and intimately discussing sensitive topics with my colleagues; some of which I never considered bringing into the academic environment beforehand. Thus the film begins with three haikus I wrote during *An Introduction to Experiential Ethnography*, but actually concern moments in my life that span beyond the past three months:

Entire country
In your body, how is it
That you can stay sane?

Does your national
Identity feel threatened
By bitter voices?
“No... Why would it?”

What was it like then? □
When you were nineteen years old
Did you think of me?

Through the 5-7-5 structure of the haiku, I was encouraged to summarize the complexity of my experience through seventeen syllables, no more, no less. This is the work of Renato Rosaldo's "Anthropoetry", one which "situates itself in a social and cultural world: poetry that is centrally about the human condition" (Rosaldo, 101). Narrowing down the endless details of my site then allowed me to provide the viewer with a starting point to the central topic of my ethnography, inviting a once strange audience to become more familiar with what passes through my heart, and what prompts me to write about the things which hold meaning at the core.

As I mentioned previously, my diasporic site places me at the center of three intersecting narratives of the same event: the artistic (through the documentary film *Waltz With Bashir*), the personal (my father's own experience as a soldier in the war), and the academic (learning about the Lebanon War in a political science course). This film attempts to place all of those narratives on top of each other through both video and audio. For a majority of the film I decided to project images of my family, Israel's representation in the media, and actual lecture slides from my Political Science class onto my apartment walls to visually communicate that at the very specific moment when all of these different and separate perspectives converged, I was at the center. And it is my placement in

the center of all of these images that distorts and reshapes them in the present. I am the accumulation of the overlapped and contradictory images, which are all ephemeral and always moveable, shifting, they don't stay. Each of these narratives harbor a political response, but all start with my personal story; only in one configuration lies my unhaunted future.

Conclusion

The virtual reality of my personal diaspora was the force which led me to ask the questions I needed to ask, to witness the accounts I needed to witness, and to acquire the knowledge I knew I was missing. But this knowledge is not only essential for my work as an anthropologist entering the ninth moment, it is also necessary for the Self within me who is ever so detached from her home, and is always subconsciously reaching for ways to come back to it. Though it may seem as if the countless inward turns I made throughout this process, project, and paper were extremely personal, I strongly believe that my experience is not a unique one. It may be one that is shared not only by fellow Israelis living in the US, but also has the potential to reach out to anyone who feels removed from a past self who is situated in a different place and is of a different time. In the ninth moment, the ethnographer might be asked to identify their site before carrying out their work, and returning

to it in order to understand what informs their arguments, theories, and commentary. In order to understand the Other, I must first understand the Self. I believe that my embrace of and interaction with my site ultimately led me to that deeper understanding, one which will better prepare me to more effectively encounter “Others”.

When I began writing this piece, I never expected to find an answer to any of my questions along the way. Instead, I only arrived at more questions: Who was not included in my discussion? Whose voices should I seek to get an image that is more representative of reality? How might the works I reference and the work I produce be received in the Contact Zone? More specifically, what is it like to be a child born into the Arab-Israeli Conflict on *both sides*? How might *Waltz With Bashir* have been different if Palestinian sources were sought out as well? And finally, what do I need to do differently in my work in order to reach these other voices, so that it may pass through the hearts of all involved in the conflict, and bring about a more just society in the future? The answering of a question with more questions defines my ethnographic process, and I believe it has implicitly defined the transition from each former ethnographic moment to the next. It could be where the next moment lies.

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