

Vilnius University
Faculty of Philology
Department of English Philology

Tomas Stankevičius

*Private and Public Memory in Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon
War Story by Ari Folman and David Polansky*

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Supervisor: Dr Rūta Šlapkauskaitė

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Abstract

This BA paper is concerned with the analysis of how the graphic novel *Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story* (2009) by Ari Folman and David Polansky subverts the depiction and perception of war and trauma in the media. The aim of this BA paper is to demonstrate how artistic choices in *Waltz with Bashir* tackle the problem of desensitization to the pain of others and explore the dynamics of memory by contributing insights on the basis of the theoretical frameworks formulated in *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993) by Scott McCloud, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004) by Alison Landsberg and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2014) by Dominick La Capra. The present reading argues that *Waltz with Bashir* is an anti-war narrative that, through depictions of traumatic private memories, attempts to shape public memory and evoke an empathetic response from readers.

1. Introduction

There is an abundance of war coverage in contemporary media. People are constantly notified of the horrific acts taking place around the globe. Such a constant stream of news overwhelms the audience and the people no longer pay much attention to a specific news story as acts of violence become too numerous for them to care about. In a way they become desensitized and no longer care about the pain of others. These images are so dominant and saturated in the public's consciousness that Susan Sontag, American writer and political activist, even noted that "the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11 2001, was described as "unreal," "surreal," "like a movie," in many of the first accounts of those who escaped from the towers or watched from nearby" (Sontag, 2003: 19). Even the film industry plays a significant role by supplying people with images of over-the-top action and explosions. Most people's experience of war and violence comes from representations in the media as they have no personal memories of it themselves.

In her 2003 work *Regarding the Pain of Others* Sontag analysed the issue of war photography, stating that despite portraying the atrocities and bringing "a portion of its reality to those who have no experience of war at all" (Sontag, 2003:12), the photographs fail to present a universal argument against war. Instead of a call for peace, the photographs can be potentially used as a form of deliberate disinformation by different countries as an excuse to justify their own cause. Thus Sontag holds that the photographs are not self-evident *per se*, but require something more to convince people, namely, captions.

Yet there have been a lot of works of art from different mediums concerned with representing the atrocities of war. Not merely replicating the scene, art has a possibility to convey a message, to provide that *caption* which Sontag is concerned about. For example, the painting *Guernica* (1937) by Pablo Picasso, a response to the bombing of the town of the same name in Spain, utilized its surrealist aesthetics to depict the agony and suffering of civilian victims. Similarly, Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1967) used its advantages as a literary medium and presented a fragmented and confusing narrative to present the psychological effects of war. Furthermore, this novel is semi-autobiographical and mixes reality and fiction, given that it is inspired by real life events and yet it uses science fiction elements, as extra-terrestrials feature heavily in the plot and are used to try to explain the destruction.

The anti-war sensibility is also present in the hybrid genre between literature and the visual arts of the graphic novel. Arguably the most influential work in this field was Art

Spiegelman's Pulitzer prize winning graphic novel *Maus* (1991). It presents the author of the graphic novel interviewing and documenting his father's experiences during the Holocaust. *Maus* (1991) took a more realistic approach to storytelling more akin to a documentary at a time when graphic novels were widely dominated by fantasy and science fiction. What set it apart from the other works of sequential art of the time was primarily its serious subject matter and the visual metaphor depicting the Jews as mice and Nazis as felines (Duncan and Smith, 2009: 71).

A similar work comes from Ari Folman, an Israeli filmmaker, also born to Holocaust survivors, who surprised the world with his full feature animated documentary film *Waltz with Bashir* (2008), which was later adapted into a graphic novel and re-released in 2009 under the title *Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story*. The graphic novel is based on real events. In 1982, the Israeli army invaded South Lebanon. Bashir Gemayel, senior commander of the Phalangist Christian militia, was elected President of the occupied Lebanon. However after he was assassinated, his armed forces took revenge by massacring the occupants of Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. Men, women and children, were all killed with horrific cruelty. The story of the graphic novel follows filmmaker and ex-Israeli army soldier Ari Folman interviewing several fellow veterans of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Ari himself, despite having been present, has no recollection of the events, only a vision of himself floating in the sea, overlooking the massacre. The metafictional narrative features Folman filling in the gaps in his recollection of the events by incorporating the memories of other people. It should be noted that the graphic novel does not stray from depicting dreams and hallucinations alongside memories. Furthermore, memory itself is shown to be unreliable because of its susceptibility to distortion and tendency to form false memories. The graphic novel ends with photographs from the massacre by Robert Moyer.

The film was met with wide critical acclaim and won numerous prizes, among which was a Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film and a Best Picture award by International Documentary Association¹. A.O. Scott of *New York Times* called *Waltz with Bashir* "a memoir, a history lesson, a combat picture, a piece of investigative journalism and an altogether amazing film."² Comparisons with well known and critically acclaimed Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* as well as works of Joe Sacco and Art Spiegelman's *Maus* were made by

¹ <http://waltzwithbashir.com/prizes.html> (accessed on the 20th of March, 2016)

² http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/26/movies/26bash.html?_r=0 (accessed on the 8th of January, 2016)

The Boston Globe and The New York Times³. All these works present real life events narrated in the form of a graphic novel, thus stretching the boundaries of what is accepted as a documentary by problematizing the relation between fiction and reality. All of the critical reception has been concerned with the film, rather than the graphic novel adaptation.

The aim of this BA paper is to analyse how *Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story* (2009) subverts the depiction of war and trauma in the media. Theoretical frameworks from following works will be used: *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993) by Scott McCloud, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004) by Alison Landsberg and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2014) by Dominick La Capra. The first part of the analysis, titled *The Logic of Iagemaking*, is concerned with the representation of memory and trauma, while the second part, *The Ethics of Memory*, deals with how the graphic novel tackles the problem of desensitization and explores the theme of response and responsibility.

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http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/080508892X?ie=UTF8&isInframe=1&n=283155&redirect=true&ref=dp_proddesc_0&s=books&showDetailProductDesc=1#iframe-wrapper (accessed on the 20th of March, 2016)

2. Art as Communication

Before analysing the graphic novel it is imperative to understand its nature as a work of sequential art. Therefore this BA paper shall provide a brief summary of relevant terms and concepts from an American cartoonist and comics theorist Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993). The book discusses comics as a form of art, while analysing the stylistic and formal aspects of the medium.

McCloud defines comics as "(j)uxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or aesthetic response in the viewer" (McCloud, 1993: 20). Comics narrate stories by way of panels, individual frames that are fragments of "both time and space" of the narrative (ibid. p. 67). An essential and unique concept to sequential art is *closure*, a "phenomenon of observing parts but perceiving the whole" (ibid. p. 63). Given incomplete information, the reader will use his past experience and/or imagination to make sense of what is presented⁴. Closure happens in the gutter, usually a blank space that separates the panels. This is how the reader apprehends the narrative in the forms of sequential art, as without closure there would be no sequence in which the story is presented. The reader has to actively participate in accessing the story by connecting the panels and filling in the gaps. The reader plays no less a part than the artist in constructing the story (ibid. p. 68). This is also how sequential art can evoke an emotional or sensual response (ibid. p. 121). It should be noted, however, that while the more removed the images are from reality, the easier it is to mentally link them because of their conceptual nature, more realistic images make the process more challenging (ibid. p. 91).

McCloud describes icons as images used to represent persons, places, things or ideas. For example words are icons, but they convey an abstract concept of the thing the word refers to. However, for the purpose of this BA paper, we will focus on icons designed to visually resemble their subjects, namely, *pictures*. It should be noted that the level of resemblance varies (ibid. p. 27). While the more detailed the picture, the more faithfully it depicts reality, the opposite part of the spectrum, the cartoon, simplifies the visual representation (ibid. p. 30). By lowering the complexity and the level of detail of the image the artists can represent anything in their conceptual stage. In this manner, the picture sacrifices objective photorealistic authenticity, but this simplification allows the readers to experience the narrative more intensely. Diminishing the details and restraining the output of information makes for a less complicated reading.

⁴ The concept of closure is similar to a Wolfgang Iser's literary notion of readers filling in the gaps.

McCloud states that through such abstraction the cartoon gains relatable universality as the more conceptual the image, the more people can find it relatable (ibid. p. 31). The features that remain gain more significance. Consequentially, the cartoon acts like a vessel which lets the readers experience the narrative by identification, claiming “we don’t just observe the cartoon, we become it!” (McCloud, 1993: 36). The cartoon *draws* the reader in. We pour our awareness and direct concentration into the narrative and in that moment *we are what we read*. Furthermore, the author asserts that people constantly also identify with various inanimate objects that surround them. The tools people use become their extension of self-awareness (ibid. p. 39).

Lastly, McCloud, discusses comics as a medium of communication and states that to overcome the inability for people to connect with each other directly mind-to-mind they use various mediums to carry their ideas. The most common, pragmatic, and time-efficient medium is language, however, McCloud is more interested in the cases of creative work, namely, visual art. Seemingly not subscribing to Roland Barthes’ ideas in *The Death of the Author* (1967), the comics theorist holds that decoding a work of another person means coming into a communication with its author. This connection can breach the wall of ignorance and apathy, and makes possible accepting a different point of view (McCloud, 1993: 198). A work of art holds the potential to serve as a communication between people. This is also the primary concern of the next work to be discussed here.

Another work, concerned with communication, is *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004) by a George Mason University professor Alison Landsberg. She argues that “modernity makes possible and necessary a new form of public cultural memory” (Landsberg, 2004: 2). Visual mass cultural forms like cinema or television can, through their visual nature, instill in the minds of their audience an image of a historical event. This new form of memory, which she calls *prosthetic memory*, “emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past” (ibid. p. 2). In other words, prosthetic memories form in a virtual realm between the consumer’s own personal life experience and the representation of historical events. As the name suggests, prosthetic memory acts not unlike a prosthesis substituting a body part; an artificial creation filling a lack. In this case, someone else’s experience, mediated through a narrative becomes part of one’s own private archives of memory. It is an active interpretation of history, rather than simply being aware of a historical fact. The viewers experience the historical narrative personally, as if they lived through the story themselves (Landsberg, 2004: 2).

Even though remembering events one did not live through is not a new phenomenon, prosthetic memories are different from other types of memory. Historical or cultural collective memories unify people under the same identity and construct common origins, they deemphasize or nullify the difference between individuals. A characteristic of prosthetic memory is that the person is conscious of the difference between his and false memories, as Landsberg explains, “(p)eople who acquire these memories are led to feel a connection to the past but, all the while, to remember their position in the contemporary moment” (Landsberg, 2004: 9). Although the nature of such memory is artificial, it has the power to shape the person’s thoughts and emotions. Incorporating foreign memory into one’s system invokes empathy as people open themselves to identify with others. It should be noted that the word *sympathy* denotes an initial likeness and shared identity, which makes it a feature of a cultural collective memory. The word *empathy* foregrounds “the lack of identity between subjects, (...) negotiating distances” (ibid. p. 135). A sense of connection to another person coupled with a recognition of his or her difference allows for a better understanding and appreciation of the other. This also means that engaging with the past in such a way can bring forth changes in the present.

While Landsberg’s book explores three cases of the formation of prosthetic memories, only one is relevant to this BA paper, namely, the Holocaust⁵. The author asserts that the recollections of the pain, violence, and trauma brought about by the genocide may not exclusively belong to the Jews, but by the means of mass media can be shared by anyone, regardless of their background or ethnicity.

Landsberg comments on Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel’s challenge to preserve the Holocaust in history, which would require keeping it in memory. Yet this becomes complicated as these memories can only last as long as the life-span of the last survivor. This is not only a matter of transgenerational memory, which concerns parents passing down their personal stories to their children. Landsberg further problematizes the issue by bringing attention to French philosopher and literary theorist Jean-François Lyotard’s concept of the *différend* as well as observations about problems that arise with testimonies and representations of the Holocaust. The *différend* is a case of conflict that cannot be reasonably resolved because the arguments

⁵ The reason why this BA paper relies so much on the Holocaust studies is because both *Waltz with Bashir* and the Holocaust are concerned with mass extermination. Additionally, Folman’s parents lived through Auschwitz concentration camp, which made the Sabra and Shatila massacre more significant to him (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 91).

of the wronged party are not recognised by the culprit. This is realised by historical revisionists who doubt the legitimacy and authority of claims that one has lived through mass extermination. They argue it would involve one personally witnessing the extermination, but if that were the case, then one would not be alive to give their account of the killing (Landsberg, 2004: 112). This historical relativism can be used by historical negationists, who try to distort the perception and remembrance of a past event to suit their own interests⁶. In contrast, the concept of prosthetic memory aims to do exactly the opposite.

In an attempt to prolong the life span of such memories and combat historical revisionism, the testimonies of survivors were filmed. However, the accounts of survivors mediated in such a form do not form prosthetic memories for their lack of visuals to accompany their story and therefore fail to inspire the audience for action. “If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in”, Landsberg quotes Nietzsche (ibid. p. 112). This means that the presentation of trauma needs to inspire awe in some way to which the author suggests that evoking an emotional response from the audience is as necessary as deriving an intellectual one (ibid. p. 113).

Most texts and documentary films depicting the Holocaust were striving for objectivity through distance, seemingly to ascertain their authenticity as a valid account of past events. Yet Landsberg claims that seeing the malnourished and tortured prisoners of concentration camps actually prevented the audience from identifying with the victims because their bodies were too alien and unfamiliar to the eyes of the spectators, which made the story feel impersonal to them (ibid. p. 124). However, Steven Spielberg’s movie *Schindler’s List* (1993) deviated from this practice and allowed the audience to see the Jews before their eventual dehumanization, thus the audience experienced their hardships more empathetically. Landsberg proposes that the process of identification is more influenced by the appearance of the person rather than their background (Landsberg, 2004: 124).

Landsberg brings our attention to the last scene of *Schindler’s List*. It depicts a group of actors walking away from a liberated concentration camp, but then the scene dissolves and shows a line of real-life Jews whose lives were saved by Oskar Schindler (ibid. p. 111). Instead of the actors the audience sees the faces of the real people, on whose stories the film was based. The black and white colours which were prevalent throughout most of the film disappear with this dissolve. This marks, as Landsberg claims, a rupture between the diegetic world of the film

⁶ This resonates with Susan Sontag’s observations about deliberate disinformation to justify the conflict between warring factions

and reality, as well as “a generic and a temporal shift from the classical Hollywood mode and the past to “real life” and the present” (ibid. p. 111). By merging the realm of the film with the real world the scene therefore asserts the authenticity of the historical representation. Moreover, according to Landsberg, the final scene encapsulates what was meant to be the whole intention of the film, namely to transfer the memory from the real, *authentic* survivors of the Jewish genocide to the audience of the film, who have no genuine personal link to the historical event. Ergo, in this way *Schindler’s List* stages “the possibility of a responsible mass cultural transmission of memory”, an ethical and empathetic rendering of history (Landsberg, 2004: 111).

Another Holocaust-related prosthetic memory formation Landsberg also comments upon is Art Spiegelman’s comic book *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* (1991). Resolving to represent the Jews, the Nazis, the Polish, his father and himself as cartoonish animals in the story, Spiegelman, at first glance, distances himself and his work from the real horrific events of the past. Surrealist aesthetics remove the sense of reality and thus *Maus* does not aim to accurately represent the Holocaust, but to present a version of it (ibid. p. 151). This resonates with a long-standing ethical problem with representations of such traumatic events as the Holocaust. In contrast to *Schindler’s List*, the characters in *Maus* are completely alien to us resemblance-wise, yet the readers are still engaged in the story (although, Landsberg does not explain this further, Scott McCloud’s earlier discussed observations on cartoonish identification may explain the empathetic response). Also, the line between the authentic and the inauthentic, what happened and what is depicted, is blurred here. Additionally, *Maus* adds another layer of distance as the narrative shows the process of creation itself. It shows Spiegelman interviewing his father about his past experience and, as McCloud would say, encoding his father’s memories into the comic book. This metafictional aspect further removes the work from the real traumatic past. So, while *Maus* distances itself from the subject matter like many related works of art, it subverts the representation of the Holocaust by presenting a surreal version of it. Ergo, prosthetic memories can be formed even from representations that do not strive to be visually faithful recreations.

Landsberg comments on the significance given to objects in *Maus* and theorizes that Holocaust survivors have a peculiar relation to objects. The loss or absence of people killed during the genocide is compensated by objects. Thus objects that remain help to remember (ibid. p. 119). For example, when Vladek, the father of the comic book author, confesses to burning his dead wife’s memoirs, Spiegelman calls him a murderer. The diary was somewhat

a substitute for its author, the mother. We can take McCloud's thoughts into consideration here to suggest that a part of her resided in that inanimate object, so destroying what little was left of her, in Spiegelman's mind, equates to killing her. Landsberg comments on the scene where Vladek salvages a telephone wire to later repurpose it to something else, articulating it to be allegorical to the purpose of *Maus* (Landsberg, 2004: 116). Recirculation of wire is comparable to remembering the Holocaust, albeit in a different medium. Yet this provides a possibility for new insights and for interpreting the subject matter. Giving an old thing, a new form and not letting it go to waste is equated to making a media product that helps to form a prosthetic memory, in this case, a comic book. Landsberg also gives the example of a Vladek's glass eye. Remembering a public hanging, he begins crying and tears come out even out of his prosthetic eye. Landsberg states that his artificial eye is a metaphor for prosthetic memories (ibid. p. 117). First, it symbolises experiencing what Spiegelman (and the readers) could not witness personally. Second, even given their artificiality, both the prosthetic eye and prosthetic memory are involved in generating great emotional response. In a way, these objects are not unlike the mass media products that represent the extermination and help to form prosthetic memories. They help to extend the living memory of the deceased and the horrible past. Memory of the Holocaust is passed from Vladek to Spiegelman and from Spiegelman to the readers of *Maus*.

The last theoretical framework comes from Dominick LaCapra's 2001 work *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, a collection of five essays and an interview, all concerned with the Holocaust and its representations. The book presents a number of ideas for the study of trauma. The author describes trauma as "a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence", and which poses difficulties for representation (LaCapra, 2014: 41). The author refers to such numbing and disorienting experience as traumatic limit events and asserts that art is a relatively safe way to discuss trauma (ibid. p. 185). Doing so, however, can be "equated with acting (or playing) it out in performative discourse" (ibid. p. 186). LaCapra addresses the concept of traumatopism, describing it as trauma that becomes a founding "myth of origins" (ibid. p. xiv), a traumatic event which shapes collective memory, constructing an identity based on living through the same trauma.

Writing History, Writing Trauma is concerned with historiography and presents two approaches to it. The first, a documentary or self-sufficient research model, denotes attempts to construct a narrative based on archival documents with an emphasis on historically accurate facts and objectivity. The second approach, radical constructivism, suggests that writing history is actually no more objective than writing fiction. Narrativization entails some kind of

fictionalization. Recounting the facts in a narrative adds a layer of meaning to them (ibid. p. 17). However, LaCapra maintains that the best way to represent such traumatic events as the Holocaust is *the middle voice*. The concept advises carving out a middle road between the two aforementioned methodologies, both leaving room for objective facts, yet also accounting for the performative and aesthetic factors that construct structure and narrative.

Two texts are compared, Benjamin Wilkomorski's *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood* and Tadeusz Borowski's *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (1976). Wilkomorski's text is fiction that was intended to be read as autobiography. LaCapra theorizes that the author might be an indirect victim, who over-identified with the actual victims (this is why historians should be cautious about unchecked identification) (LaCapra, 2014: 207). One could draw a parallel with prosthetic memory here, but it should be noted that Landsberg's concept, while preaching empathy, also advocates retaining a certain distance to the source of prosthetic memory, which the author had failed to do. Thus the infamous memoir gathered much criticism for its disguise as the truth. On the other hand, Borowski's hybrid text is a different case. It is a collection of short stories, inspired by his real-life experience as a prisoner who was both a victim and victimiser in that he guarded and persecuted other prisoners (ibid. p. 208). It does not aim to deceive and yet the story is interspersed with fictionalizations. The shock of the readers not only stems from the horrors depicted, but, as LaCapra puts it, "our very inability to tell whether anything in these stories that are explicitly presented as hybridized is indeed fiction, since there seems no internal way to distinguish what was experienced, elaborated from experience, and invented" (ibid. p. 209). In other words, fiction is blended with history.

LaCapra examines the role and responsibility of a historian between the two extremes, one stating that a historian should strive for objectivity and neutrality, and the other, advocating a practice of identification with the victim of traumatic events. However, one should be cautious not to drastically fall on either side of the spectrum, and avoid both indifference and unrestrained identification. In LaCapra's view, the historian is required not to simply record the past, but exercise a disciplined empathy with the traumatized. The book notes the fact that there will come a time when a historian will no longer have witnesses and will have to depend only on texts to interpret the past. The survivor is a "living archive" with a potential contribution to public memory and must be approached with ethical sensitivity, however, their testimony can and should be felt as emotionally and intellectually disruptive. LaCapra brings up the notion of *empathic unsettlement*. It entails "being responsive to the traumatic experience of others" (ibid. p. 41), while resisting full identification with the other and

recognising that “another's loss is not identical to one's own loss” (ibid. p. 79). In other words, the concept advocates empathy with another person, but not without the awareness of otherness. This correlates with the concept of prosthetic memory. *Empathic unsettlement* serves as an obstacle to the harmonisation effect of redemptive narratives.

According to LaCapra, representations of the Holocaust should abstain from becoming what he calls a redemptive narrative. These are the stories that feature a happy conclusion that harmonizes, explains and resolves the ordeals depicted earlier. The representation of an event that is the source of great pain and anxiety should reflect the same feeling. In this way, the ending negates the trauma by trying to redeem the traumatic experience. The Holocaust possesses a certain excess and negative sublime that is unrepresentable. The aftermath of the Holocaust is rather more unsettling than redemptive and typically evokes a “silent awe” (LaCapra, 2014: 93). Incidentally, to illustrate his point LaCapra chooses *Schindler's List* as an example, but he is more critical of it than Landsberg is, and criticizes the ending as presenting an undue “spiritual uplift” (ibid. p. 14). Moreover, given that the Holocaust is *unrepresentable*, attempts at representations should reflect that in some way.

The author also discusses the psychoanalytic notions of *acting out* and *working through*. The former is a compulsive behaviour of a person (or a group of people) that revisits or reenacts (either physically or mentally) a traumatic event, yet never truly finding any solace or resolution. The traumatized is unable to move on for the past keeps invading the present (in nightmares or flashbacks) (ibid. p. 142). The latter, as the name suggests, denotes an eventual overcoming of trauma. In contrast to acting out, working through involves a certain distance from trauma. Thus the victim can distinguish the past from the present. Although it does not guarantee a total cure for trauma, working through eventually allows the possibility of closure, healing and political progress. LaCapra notes that acting-out and working through are not opposites of each other, but rather related interacting processes (ibid. p. 143).

After having discussed the relevant theoretical insights let us move on to the following section of this BA paper, which will deal with the analysis of the representation of memory, war, and trauma in *Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story*.

3. The Logic of Imagemaking

This part of the analysis is concerned with the representation of memory, war, and trauma; in what ways *Waltz with Bashir* is similar to or different from other trauma narratives; how the graphic novel relates to the depictions of war in the media, as well as the reasoning for the use of the graphic novel form and the modes of representation, namely the use of drawings and photographs.

As discussed in the Introduction, the experience of war and violence, for people, who have not witnessed it, comes from representations in the media. Yet there is so much coverage of violence, that the people eventually become desensitized to it. *Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story* seems to be well aware of the distance between itself and the audience. The graphic novel addresses the issue of representing trauma by the use of the drawing form (see Figure 1 in the appendix). It does not aim to depict an objective, visually faithful reconstruction of the 1982 Israeli invasion or the Sabra and Shatila massacre. In this manner, *Waltz with Bashir* is similar to Spiegelman's *Maus*. Both works eschew visual objectivity and authenticity. The stylistic choice to represent a historical event in a drawing form creates a distance to it. A drawing is a reconstruction, not a preservation of the event like a photograph is, it does not possess a direct link (Sontag, 2003: 21). Furthermore, both of the works feature minimalist aesthetics and do not strive to present a photorealistic, highly detailed level of resemblance. *Maus* is in black and white and *Waltz with Bashir* predominantly uses flat colours with simple and minimal shading (Fig. 1). Even in drawing form there is the potential to render the story in a visually rich manner, but neither of the works do so. The representation of the negative sublime (an excess of emotions, deemed unrepresentable by LaCapra) is avoided by portraying a cartoonish version of the traumatic event. The low level of resemblance distances the audience and promises narrative pleasure.

The issue of representation in *Waltz with Bashir* is further problematized by the fact that these are representations of memories, not the actual events themselves. The graphic novel points to a psychological experiment in which subjects remembered events that had never happened to them (see Fig. 2). The graphic novel itself suggests the illusory quality of memories and thus invites the readers to maintain a critical distance and a certain amount of incredulity towards the narrative. Furthermore, Folman's autobiographical graphic novel is paradoxically largely constituted by incorporating the memories of other people. These are not his authentic memories. His own mnemonic apparatus fails to render his experience as a soldier. Folman himself could not have witnessed some of the scenes depicted, but they are there for the

readers to see nonetheless. For example, Folman is persuaded by Frenkel to have been present in killing a boy with a RPG (Fig. 3). Whether or not Folman was actually there remains ambiguous, however what matters is that Folman accepts Frenkel's narrative as his own memory. These foreign memories (and in some cases dreams and hallucinations) become a part of his own recollection of the events. Folman incorporates public, collective memories into the archives of his own private memory. Ergo, it could be stated that the readers see the capabilities of prosthetic memories at play in the graphic novel.

Additionally, if the readers by the use of closure fill in the gaps in the story themselves, then the narrative inherently possesses a degree of fiction. They can make up parts of the story. Furthermore, the narrative injects surreal and fictitious elements into its diegetic world. For example, Folman's friend Boaz's nightmare of the dogs (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 1-4) or the ghost-like glowing appearance of Folman's ex-girlfriend as seen in Figure 4. On page 28, during a taxi ride, a tank materializes behind the director. Most probably used as a transition effect for artistic purposes it nevertheless disrupts the supposed reality of the diegetic world. Folman's vision of him overlooking the massacre is at first said to be a flashback (ibid. p. 10). Only later is it revealed to actually be a fantasy. The readers have no objective way to distinguish between what actually happened and what is fictitious. In this manner, *Waltz with Bashir* mirrors Borowksi's *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*. Both works are recountings of historical events interspersed with fictionalizations. Therefore everything depicted is made unreliable, potentially inauthentic. Thus the work of art further distances itself from the historical event it depicts. With such distance to the reality it represents, *Waltz with Bashir* seemingly becomes fiction.

Alternatively, instead of the distancing mechanism, the modes of representation could be seen as reflections of the exercise in recollection. It can be stated that the drawing form may mark the parts of the story that are potentially unreliable. The illustrations are a reconstruction of what may have happened. As observed in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2014), narrativization entails a certain degree of fictionalization. Everything until the last few pages (Folman's metafictional story of interviewing people, their memories and fantasies) are marked with epistemological uncertainty. It could all be fiction. In contrast, the photographs are authentic evidence of a past event. The last caption in the graphic novel ("AND THEN IT CAME OVER ME: WHAT I WAS LOOKING AT WAS A MASSACRE⁷") marks the transition from the inauthentic to the authentic (ibid. p. 113). The caption denotes an epiphany, a realization that marks the moment the narrator and the readers begin to be pulled

⁷ All the text in the graphic novel is capitalized.

closer towards the reality, which is symbolised by the photographs. The photographs, thus, signify the completion of Folman's quest to remember.

Moreover, the use of the drawing form and the unchronological, fragmented narrative, manifested through panels, may illustrate the effects of war and trauma on the human psyche. The atrocities of war are likened to "AN ACID TRIP" in the graphic novel (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 87). During Folman's visit to the airport he slowly comes out of his hallucination of charting a flight to see the airport no longer functioning as depicted in Fig. 5. This suggests a dream-like quality of his experience of the events. The graphic novel chooses to represent the surreal nature of war by the use of the drawing form, which, as discussed earlier, does not aim to be real, objective. The photographs would therefore symbolise the awakening from such a confused and traumatised state of mind.

How to render historical traumas that some may believe are better left undisturbed? LaCapra holds that art is a rather safe way to discuss trauma (LaCapra, 2014: 185). I propose that the form of the graphic novel is one of the best ways to do so. The panels feature only fragments of the story and are separated by blank space, which essentially functions as "holes in existence", a feature of a traumatised person's psyche (ibid. p. 41). Witnessing the horrors of war traumatises the psyche. The graphic novel renders multiple versions of Frenkel, the war-crazed dancing soldier, in the single panel (as seen in Fig. 9). Three versions of him are rendered somewhat transparent. The panels are fragments of space and time, each panel depicting a separate moment in time (McCloud, 1993: 67). This gives reason to believe this panel (Fig. 9) visualizes Frenkel's fractured state of mind, his subjective perception of reality, rather than movement. So maybe Folman's post-traumatic state of mind cannot remember the events as anything but surreal. The drawings are surreal compared to photographs. The low level of resemblance strips away reality. The negative sublime of trauma is unfathomable, impossible to depict in an objective way. In a certain way, *Waltz with Bashir* is similar to Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica*. Both works utilize surrealist aesthetics to portray the atrocities of war. Thus it could be stated that the drawing form in the graphic novel exemplifies the distorted reality and memories of a traumatised person.

If this is the case, then we should keep in mind the notions of *acting out* and *working through*. Due to the concept of closure, the graphic novel can be treated as a "performative discourse" (LaCapra, 2014: 186). The graphic novel invites readers to connect its panels, fragments of a story. Although the reason for his inability to remember was theorized to be that of guilt in the graphic novel, I propose it is possible Folman was traumatised by the experience as a soldier and as a witness of the massacre (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 107). Folman is continuously

haunted by the past, which is a characteristic of *acting out*. His fantasy of overlooking the massacre while floating in the sea (as seen in Fig. 6) appears several times throughout the graphic novel, yet Folman does not truly find any solace or resolution, because it is only a mirage (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 11-13, 26-27, 89) (Fig. 6). These visions reappear because he is unable to actually remember. He is acting out his trauma, which means he is revisiting the site of trauma through recurring flashbacks, yet never finding any closure (LaCapra, 2014: 142). His quest to remember is not completed and a truthful recollection still escapes him. However, once the gaps in his memory are filled in with recollections of other people, the narrative introduces photographs, thus finally completing Folman's vision. This gives reason to believe that Folman *worked through* his trauma⁸. Having resolved his main goal in the narrative Folman now has a possibility to achieve closure. By working through, the traumatised, in this case Folman, achieves a certain distance to trauma and can view it objectively. The objectivity is signified by the photographs at the end of the graphic novel, because their more realistic level of resemblance makes them more reliable and faithful to reality (McCloud, 1993: 46).

Let us move to the next point in this part of the analysis to discuss the chaos of war rendered as a show. For instance, in his interview Ronnie Dayag confesses that the time he spent driving in a tank felt like a vacation to him. He took the time to enjoy the scenery, take pictures. Despite being on a mission, war created an opportunity for him to relax (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 34-36). Another scene shows soldiers leisurely spending their time at the beach despite bombings near them (Fig.7). In the scene that inspires the title of the graphic novel itself we can see a soldier (Frenkel) dancing while being shot at (Fig. 8). He says he needs to do "SOMETHING DRAMATIC" (Fig. 1), as if he senses that the narrative demands it of him. I do not claim that the characters are aware they are in a story. Rather, the people pictured share a similar, however hyperbolized, attitude of real-life people to the depictions of war as observed by Susan Sontag. People are infatuated by the representations of war. To them, war is mainly a spectacle that comes via the media, a form of entertainment. They associate images of cruelty and destruction with narrative pleasure (Sontag, 2003: 85; Brink, 2013: 180). *Waltz with Bashir* satirizes this depiction of violence as entertainment. For example, a war scene is captioned "AND WITH ALL THIS GOING ON, THERE WERE CIVILIANS, STANDING OUT IN THEIR BALCONIES-WOMEN, CHILDREN, OLD PEOPLE, WATCHING AS IF THEY WERE AT A MOVIE" (Fig. 10). The apathy and dissociation between the spectators and people in danger is exaggerated in this scene. This is

⁸ Prosthetic memories and *working through* are not dissimilar concepts, but this is a question for the second part of the analysis.

exemplified by the dancing soldier. It is as if he is performing in a staged play, albeit with a total disregard for his own life (which he shares with the spectators).

The graphic novel gives clues to how to interpret it. A psychologist tells Folman a story of her patient, who invented an imaginary camera to distance himself and cope with the terrors he was surrounded by (Fig. 11). Like Ronnie Dayag, this patient pretended to be on a trip and saw everything as if behind a camera. He most probably was also affected by the saturation of war images, for he was fascinated by “SHOOTING, SCREAMING, EXPLOSIONS” and wounded people (Fig. 11). These sightings reminded the patient of what he had seen before in the media. However, when he witnessed a pile of slaughtered horses, his imaginary camera broke down. Corpses of horses are a more rare sight than corpses of people, which the patient was accustomed to seeing in the media. The terror of the negative sublime overwhelmed him, because the sight deviated from what he was seasoned to see.

I argue that this *imaginary camera* is a metaphor for the drawing form of the graphic novel itself. The drawing form is evidently more constructed and artificial, thus it presents a certain distance to the narrative and the reality it represents. In parallel, the closest to a memory of the Sabra and Shatila massacre Folman had was his vision of the sea, which was quite similarly removed from an actual memory as the drawing form is removed from the reality it depicted. It is a fantasy. Up until the ending of the novel the readers have been experiencing the story as if through an imaginary camera. The distancing mechanism of the imaginary camera is broken by including Robin Moyer’s photographs from the massacre (Fig. 12). Like the patient was shocked to see a pile of dead horses, the readers of the novel are shocked to see the mangled bodies of human beings. The readers were adjusted to the simplistic drawing form. The narrative presented a diegetic world which allowed the readers to entertain themselves with what was seemingly fiction and detached from reality. The drawing form, I argue, functions much like a device of defamiliarization, which removes the “automatism of perception” (Shklovsky, 1999: 21). The use of drawings to depict scenes of war and violence deviates from the usual practice of the media. Changing the mode of representation makes the readers perceive the representation from a new perspective. The drawing form gives no reason for readers to associate the graphic novel with the overwhelming amount of war photographs. However, when *Waltz with Bashir* changes its mode of representation it shatters its constructed diegetic world. By shifting from illustrations to photographs in the last few pages, the graphic novel defamiliarizes its readers once again. As McCloud said, realistic images

make the process of closure more challenging (McCloud, 1993: 91). Thus the jump from the cartoonish diegetic world to photorealistic representation is quite jarring.⁹

The last image that precedes the photographs is a close-up of Folman's face (Fig. 13). Afterwards the gaze is turned outwards, the readers can see through his eyes. Here the two worlds of fiction and reality, signified by the drawings and photographs respectively, clash. When we assume Folman's point of view, we can see a reflection of our own real world. The shift to photography reduces the distance to the reality the graphic novel represents and brings the readers one step closer to the negative sublime. The diegetic world of illustrations presented an inverted suspension of disbelief. The readers could suspend their belief in the authenticity of the story. With it gone, the narrative leaves the readers with shocking evidence of cruelty.

The distancing mechanism of the imaginary camera (the drawing form), that allowed some readers to indulge in apathy, is broken down to abolish the apparent disconnect between representation and reality. The low level of resemblance renders the war in a more conceptual way, rather than realistic. *Waltz with Bashir* is thus concerned with the concept of war, not just the 1982 conflict. The graphic novel demonstrates every war being the same. It refers to and compares itself to the picture of the Warsaw ghetto, thus linking the Sabra and Shatila massacre to the Holocaust (as seen in Figure 14). World War II is also brought forth (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 68). As a result, the graphic novel tells the story of every war.

LaCapra discerns that the endings of traumatic stories are that of *silent awe* (LaCapra, 2014: 93). Correspondingly, the last few pages of Folman's graphic novel eschew captions. Ironically this goes against Sontag's remarks on the danger of photographs without captions, which suggest that merely presenting the evidence of cruelty is not enough to make an argument against war. I propose that the narrative and the purposeful use of modes of representation in *Waltz with Bashir* subvert this potential danger. The last caption in the graphic novel ekphrastically reads "AND THEN IT CAME OVER ME: WHAT I WAS LOOKING AT WAS A MASSACRE" (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 113). This is the message. War is a massacre. Neither side of the conflict is presented as being right or heroic. Innocent people are killed. By doing the opposite, by leaving the photographs without captions and thus 'silent', the graphic novel conveys a sense of the negative sublime. The readers, used to

⁹ If we remember Landsberg's observations about the ending scene of *Schindler's List*, both Spielberg's film and the graphic novel in question assert their authenticity as historical dramas. Parallel to the ending scene of the film, which allowed the audience to see actual people on whose stories the film was based, in the case of the graphic novel, the readers are presented with photographs of the massacre.

the captions and the drawing form are left with the silence of the photographs, exhibiting the actual horrors of war. The negative sublime resists being put into words¹⁰. I argue that this was done with a possible purpose of making the readers no longer see entertainment in the pain of others, to evoke emphatic unsettlement. The relationship between readers and the graphic novel is to be discussed in the next part of the analysis.

¹⁰ In Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* it is said that nothing intelligent could be said about a massacre. All such remarks are equated to a bird nonsensically singing "poo-tee-weet." (Vonnegut, 1972: 9)

4. The Ethics of Memory

In the previous part of the analysis, this BA paper discussed the issues of representing war and trauma in *Waltz with Bashir*. Now, let us focus on the means by which the graphic novel combats apathy. This part of the analysis deals with how the graphic novel tackles the problem of desensitization and explores the theme of response and responsibility.

The graphic novel has a theme of substitutes, degrees of separation, and dependence. It shows people acquiring knowledge from proxies, indirect sources. In addition to Folman filling in the gaps in his memory by narratives of events he did not actually see, there are numerous other examples. The eponymous Bashir Gemayel, senior commander of the Phalangist Christian militia and newly elected President of the occupied Lebanon, is largely absent throughout the graphic novel, only appearing in posters on the walls (Fig. 10). His assassination is never shown, despite its enormous importance to the narrative. The readers only witness its consequences (the Sabra and Shatila massacre). The same largely applies to the massacre itself. The graphic novel presents only its fragments. When the journalist Ron Ben-Yishai is informed about the massacre, a colonel says to him “I DIDN’T SEE IT, BUT THEY SAY THERE’S BEEN A TERRIBLE MASSACRE” (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 103). A regiment commander states “MY MEN SAY THERE’S A MASSACRE GOING ON IN THE CAMPS (...) I DIDN’T SEE IT MYSELF” (ibid. p. 104). Folman professes there were several “CIRCLES OF PEOPLE” around the massacre, each with different amount of knowledge (ibid. p. 106). Each circle participated in the massacre a certain amount. Folman’s squad was on top of the roof that shot flares to light up the refugee camps at night. Yet for Folman there is little to no difference between himself and the Phalangist forces, who did the actual killing. He still holds himself no less responsible. The graphic novel puts forward an idea that Folman could not remember the massacre because he felt guilty. Moreover, by the use of closure, the readers are made accomplices to the massacre depicted. They become entangled in another circle. According to McCloud, the artist only sets up the scene, the reader is the one to complete the murder (McCloud, 1993: 68). Thus, the readers are forced to participate in the killing, much like Folman was. The readers are made to share the same unwitting moral burden as Folman.

We can see this theme in the choice of text presentation throughout the graphic novel. Captions and speech bubbles share an almost identical design. The only difference is the presence of a tail (that directly links the text and the visually present speaker in the panel) in speech bubbles. One design is used universally, it does not distinguish between persons or

even the focaliser. The design of captions therefore reflects how the readers see not a singular autobiographical story with separate characters, but each interviewee's contribution serves as a fragment in a bigger narrative of the graphic novel. This mirrors the prosthetic nature of the narrative. The autobiographical narration is made by incorporating foreign memories.

Waltz with Bashir shares Sontag's concern for public apathy. In addition to the dissociative mechanism of the imaginary camera (Fig. 11), civilians overlooking the shootout (Fig. 10), there are numerous other examples. Ariel Sharon, the Minister of Defense, remains either incredulous of the massacre, because Ron Ben-Yishai cannot authenticate his statements as a first-hand witness or just remains apathetic (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 105). During his leave, Folman is surprised to see that war has not affected the daily life of combat-free zones (Folman & Polonsky, 2009: 62-63). These people remain oblivious, or rather indifferent, to the deaths and injuries in armed conflicts outside of their sight. They are too separated, too distant from the pain of others to care.

The graphic novel explores what it means to be a witness. How are they supposed to respond? What is one's relation to the event if one has not seen it with one's own eyes? What responsibility should a not a first-hand witness have, if at all? Alison Landsberg's concept of prosthetic memory seems to provide an answer to these questions. According to her, someone else's experience, mediated through a narrative can become a part of another person's private archives of memory. Despite the artificial nature of such memory, it has a power to shape the person's thoughts and emotions. People with prosthetic memories become more empathetic to and gain solidarity with the first-hand witnesses. They can assume their point of view. Forming a memory creates a more personal connection to the event than just being aware of it as a historical fact. The people can no longer disassociate themselves from the victims. In this manner, the formation of prosthetic memories opposes apathy. These persons can no longer remain desensitized to the pain of others, because the victims lose their otherness. Sharing the same memories brings people closer.

Folman's narrative may serve as atonement for his participation in the massacre. He feels responsible for the massacre, even though he did not actually kill anyone (at least the graphic novel does not suggest it). Folman feels like both the witness and the perpetrator. He feels responsible for the prevention of further wars, as suggested by the anti-war narrative. The graphic does not endorse any side in the conflict¹¹. Neither the Israeli nor Palestinian armies are portrayed as heroes. Rather, all acts of killing are presented being senseless. We can interpret the title of the graphic novel as a waltz with bullets, a waltz with war. The graphic

¹¹ This resonates with Sontag's remarks on war photography being used to justify war

novel ends in tragedy, possibly suggesting the same outcome for all wars. We should remember McCloud's statements about people pouring their awareness into inanimate objects. The tools people use become an extension of one's awareness of self (McCloud, 1993: 39). At some level objects can contain a part of a person. In Landsberg's terms, these objects are potential sites of prosthetic memory (Landsberg, 2004: 119). The graphic novel may thus serve as a metaphorical memorial to the victims of the massacre and the victims of war. As discussed earlier, the readers are also made to participate in the massacre (albeit in the furthest circle). That is to say, readers inherit a sense of responsibility from Folman.

In the previous part of the analysis we discussed how prosthetic memories operate in the characters in the graphic novel (Folman forms prosthetic memories by listening to other people's accounts of the 1982 invasion). Let us now examine their influence outside the graphic novel, namely their influence on the readers. What is the relation between readers and the text? I argue that the graphic novel itself is a site of prosthetic memory. *Waltz with Bashir* imparts its readers with a prosthetic memory of the 1982 events. Representation of the events in the work of art substitutes its actual experience for the readers. In light of Landsberg's discussion of Spiegelman's *Maus*, we should remember that representations that do not strive to be visually faithful recreations can still render a prosthetic memory. This means that despite the low level of resemblance in *Waltz with Bashir*, it can still provide its readers with a surrogate recollection. Furthermore, Landsberg suggests that the rendering of trauma needs to inspire awe in some way and thus evoke an emotional and intellectual response from the audience (Landsberg, 2004: 113). Folman's graphic novel does this by evoking a sense of the negative sublime, an excess of emotion that creates awe. As discussed in the previous part, it manifests in the graphic novel by changing the mode of representation from drawings to photographs, thus shattering its diegetic world. The graphic novel shocks the readers that potentially viewed the narrative as fiction, only to realise the graphic novel was actually more of a documentary. Also, the photographs are visually disturbing as they depict corpses of people in pools of blood. Thus, *Waltz with Bashir* leaves a lasting impression that shocks the readers and ensures their attention.

Since *Waltz with Bashir* is inspired by real historical events, in a certain way, reading the graphic novel means reading the past. In this regard, the readers of *Waltz with Bashir* assume some of the responsibilities expected of historians. According to LaCapra, historians struggle between the two extremes of empathizing with the past or assuming an indifferently objective stance. LaCapra maintains that the best way to represent traumatic events is by the use of *the middle voice*, simultaneously leaving room for objective facts, yet also accounting for the

performative and aesthetic factors that construct structure and narrative. It can be argued that *Waltz with Bashir* may be adhering to the rules of *the middle voice*. The story of the graphic novel is based on real events, yet, as discussed in the previous part of the analysis, there is a certain degree of fictionalization. The photographs at the end of the graphic novel ground the narrative in reality. This relates to the form of the graphic novel as well. First, the panels are objective parts of the narrative; they provide fragments of the story. However, the readers must participate in the creation of the story, to fill in the gaps between the fragments of time and space of each panel. In other words, reading Folman's graphic novel is a performative act.

If the middle road is the best way to represent trauma, the best way to respond to a trauma narrative to LaCapra is by way of empathic unsettlement. LaCapra asserts that historians, or, in our case, readers of the graphic novel, have the responsibility to respond to trauma narratives in an ethical way. It entails being sensitive to the "traumatic experience of others" (LaCapra, 2014: 41), yet maintaining a certain distance to the victim. In contrast, LaCapra believes that a redemptive narrative, a harmonising account of the events, is an improper and unethical way to render trauma, because by presenting a satisfying conclusion, such a narrative negates trauma. The rendition of trauma needs to be respectful to the victims. I argue that *Waltz with Bashir* does not feature what LaCapra calls a redemptive narrative. The ending of the graphic novel is not uplifting, rather it is shocking and disheartening. As discussed in the previous part of the analysis, *Waltz with Bashir* ends in a *silent awe*. It features the negative sublime, which serves as an obstacle to the harmonisation effect of redemptive narratives. Thus the graphic novel presents an ethical rendering of trauma, as it leaves the massacre unresolved. The narrative abruptly ends without any afterword or a eulogy.

How does *Waltz with Bashir* combat the desensitization and apathy to the pain of others? In my view, this is achieved through empathy. *Waltz with Bashir* is concerned with closing distances. Through the use of closure, the readers are required to participate in constructing the story, which is to say that they cannot remain passive and indifferent. They bridge the gaps between the separate panels and empathy bridges the gaps between people. As discussed earlier, the readers are invited to empathize with the victims depicted in the graphic novel through the formation of prosthetic memories. Readers are made to feel closer to the victims. Admittedly, both empathic unsettlement and prosthetic memory require a certain distance, the recognition of the difference between the victim and the witness. It should be noted that sharing the memories of the traumatic experience of the Sabra and Shatila massacre does not establish a foundation myth, discussed by LaCapra (ibid. p. xiv), for the readers of the graphic novel. Cultural memories unify people under the same identity by negating individuality. The

formation of prosthetic memories require an awareness of difference. This distance allows us to view the situation more objectively and rationally, without the implied “confusion of self” of unchecked identification (ibid. p. 28).

Folman’s memory loss mirrors the indifference of the public. The graphic novel suggests that the atrocities can be brought back into public memory, much like Folman could fill the lack in his own by forming prosthetic memories. If the readers, desensitized to the pain of others, finally encountered the negative sublime by reading this graphic novel, they should be aware of the atrocities in all wars, because through its conceptual level of resemblance *Waltz with Bashir* depicts every war. Readers then have the responsibility to respond to the trauma of other people with ethical sensitivity and empathic unsettlement. In light of Scott McCloud’s statements about works of art having the power to connect people (McCloud, 1993: 198) it can be argued that *Waltz with Bashir* tries to breach the wall of ignorance and apathy by sharing Folman’s and other witnesses’ private memories. The graphic novel presents these private memories for the public to witness and to form prosthetic memories, thus planting the seeds for social and political progress, namely, closing the distance between people.

5. Conclusions

While adapted from the film, the fragmented form of the graphic novel is a better way for writing trauma. The medium of the graphic novel is more performative, demanding more participation from the reader. This also allows for rendering trauma in what LaCapra calls *the middle voice*. Folman communicates his own war trauma in a fragmentary form that reflects the disorienting experience of historic events.

The graphic novel imparts its readers with prosthetic memories of the 1982 conflict. The nature of prosthetic memories preach solidarity and empathy, they act in opposition to conflicts. Through the conceptual level of resemblance, the graphic novel demonstrates every war being the same. Thus Folman's work of art is *in memoriam* to all the victims of every war.

Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story seems to be well aware of the apparent distance between itself and the readers. Through its metafictional narrative, fictionalisations, surrealism, and unreliable memories the graphic novel seemingly distances itself from the reality it represents. Yet the work of art satirizes human desensitization to violence. It presents people, who distance themselves from traumatic experiences as if by an imaginary camera, a dissociative mechanism which reflects the public's attitude to the oversaturation of war imagery. Images of violence do not shock, hence violence becomes commonplace. *Waltz with Bashir* uses the drawing form to defamiliarise the readers. The low level of resemblance creates a distance to the cruel reality. The cartoonish depictions reflect how seriously the public perceives the pain of others. However, by shifting the mode of representation to photography in the last few pages *Waltz with Bashir* shatters its constructed diegetic world of illustrations, thus reducing the distance to the reality it represents and bringing the readers one step closer to the negative sublime. This second defamiliarisation acts like an epiphany, showing readers the disconnect between reality and representation.

The graphic novel invites the readers to close distances, to break the dissociative camera, to bridge the separate panels, to connect people, thus stopping desensitization to the pain of others. The depiction of Folman's and other witnesses' private memories acts like a prosthesis to the, otherwise lacking in empathy, public memory.

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Summary in Lithuanian

Atminties apraiškos Ari Folman ir David Polonsky grafiniame romane „Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon Story“

Šiuo baigiamuoju bakalauro darbu siekiama atskleisti, kaip Ari Folman ir David Polonsky grafiniame romane „Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story“ (2009) pasitelkdami menines priemones vaizduoja karą, atmintį ir traumą. Darbe remiamasi amerikiečių filosofės Susan Sontag įžvalgomis apie karo ir smurto vaizdinių perteklių žiniasklaidoje ir kaip tai lemia visuomenės abejingumą.

Vizualinio kūrinio analizė paremta komiksų teoretiko Scott McCloud teorinėmis įžvalgomis apie grafinio romano meno formą, Dominick La Capra idėjomis apie traumą ir jos reprezentaciją bei Alison Landsberg idėjomis apie kūrinio, istorijos ir skaitytojo santykį. Pastarosios teigimu, tikrais faktais paremti vizualūs masinės kultūros naratyvai gali suformuoti protezinį įvykių atsiminimą, šitaip sukuriant empatinį ryšį tarp meno kūrinio auditorijos ir praeities.

Grafinio romano siužetas paremtas tikrais įvykiais. 1982 metais Izraelio kariuomenė įsiveržė Libaną. Keršydami už savo vadovo Bashir Gemayel nužudymą, Libano falangos daliniai surengė žudynes Sabros ir Šatilos pabėgėlių stovyklose. Šiame romane vaizduojama, kaip buvęs Izraelio kariuomenės karys, režisierius Ari Folman bando atgauti prarastus prisiminimus apie 1982 metų įvykius, imdamas interviu iš liudytojų. Inkorporuodamas kitų žmonių atsiminimus, sapnus bei fantazijas, jis užpildo savo atminties spragas.

Baigiamajame darbe aiškinama, kad nepatikima atminties prigimtis ir trauma yra perteikiama grafinio romano fragmentiška forma, siurrelistiniais aspektais naratyve bei piešiniiais. Vaizdavimo forma piešiniiais taip pat pašiepia atotrūkį tarp tikrų įvykių bei žmonių matomų reprezentacijų, suteikdama galimybę atsiriboti nuo istorijos, kuria paremtas naratyvas. Kūrinio gale pateiktos fotografijos pašalina piešinių sukurtą atsiribojimo mechanizmą. „Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story“ suformuoja skaitytojams 1982 metų konflikto protezinį atsiminimą. Taip kelių asmenų vaizduojami atsiminimai lemia, kad nuo smurto vaizdinių pertekliaus apatiška visuomenė pajaučia empatiją.

Appendix

Figure 1



Figure 4



Figure 2



Figure 5

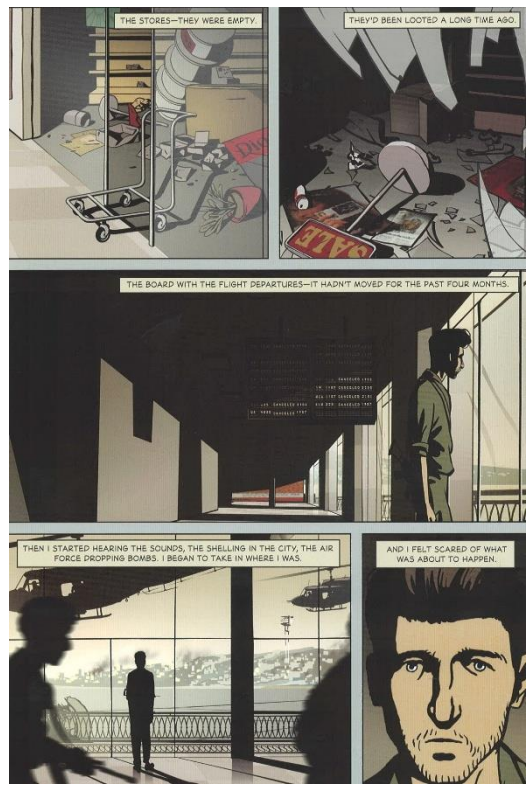


Figure 3



Figure 6

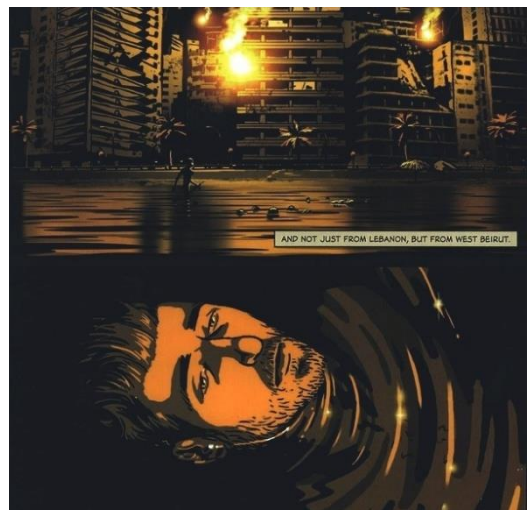


Figure 7

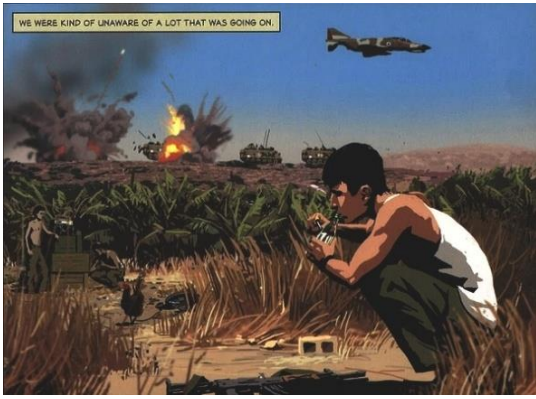


Figure 8

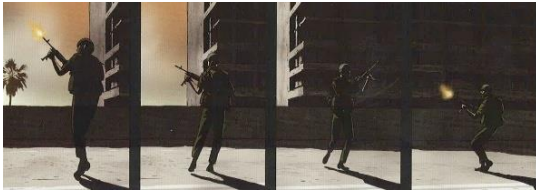


Figure 9



Figure 10

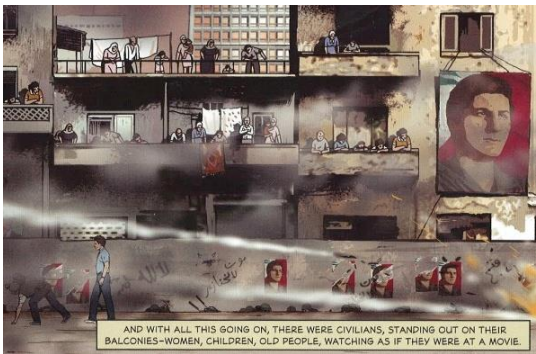


Figure 11



Figure 12

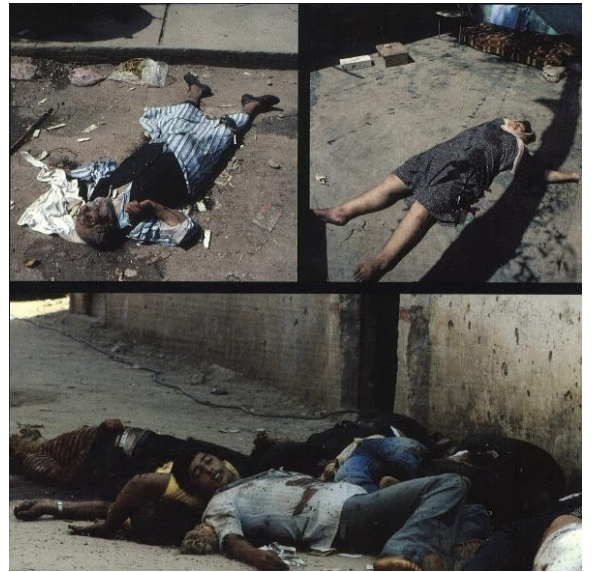


Figure 13



Figure 14

