

Unit Paper Week 7

Yael Monk states that the three movies *Beaufort*, *Waltz with Bashir* and *Lebanon* explore the idea of war. They also display the various trials soldiers face and the horrors of war. This is presented from the soldiers' point of view. In the past, Israeli war films tended to try to draw out feelings of patriotism. Later on, these films changed tactics. Instead, they started to show the reality of war. This does not mean that Israeli citizens were not patriotic. Instead, maybe they were wearying of war. This is seen in movies such as *Beaufort*. For example, in this movie the soldiers were the second generation to fight for the mountain. It is easy to imagine that the parents might not be pleased about this. After all, the battle is fought far from Israeli borders. One of the families had already lost a brother/uncle to the mountain. Did they also want to lose a son? Monk states that, in some way, *Beaufort* is about opening one's eyes to the reality of life in the military. Liraz, the young commander, almost worships the commanding officers. He follows every order without question. In addition, he becomes angry when other soldiers do not. This is seen when Liraz orders the bomb squad man to proceed with demolition. This results in the other soldier dying. However, his death serves as a turning point. (Munk)

Liraz starts to question whether blindly following orders is a decent thing to do. *Beaufort* is about dismantling old legends. It is a story about following orders blindly vs taking a humanistic side. (Munk)

In *Waltz with Bashir*, the story is told from a single point of view. The main character has a hole in his memory relating to the war. As a result, he is able to live peacefully. Then, he decides, because of recurrent dreams, that he needs to piece his memories together with the memories of

comrades. Also, he meets a doctor who explains traumatic memory repression to him. All in all, it is an interesting story. The story is memorable for a few reasons. For example, it does not follow the formula of most war films. This was done intentionally by the director. In a lot of war films, you end up admiring the main character. He takes on a hero role. In this film, there was none of that. As a result, there was not any glory to be admired. You did not see any brotherhood among the troops. In addition, you saw some of the civilian victims of war. These scenes were shown as part of a news clip.

In the movie *Lebanon*, the film opens with the image of a flower. To be specific, it is a sunflower under a blue sky. The date was printed at the bottom. The rest of the film or the rest of it took place in a tank. Inside the tank are four soldiers, all of whom are hungry and want to return home. Over time, the fear brought on by the war damages their friendship. The movie ends in the same place that it began. (Munk)

Munk states that after the three films won acclaim, Israeli cinema seemed to change. It makes sense to follow the winners. (Munk)

Overall, Munk says that the three films are about trying to retrieve your youth. The soldiers' youth was left behind on a battlefield. (Munk)

Munk states that the soldiers feel abandoned in the films. I would say that there is certainly truth to this statement. (Munk)

In *Beaufort*, the soldiers are left in a foreign country. They are the second generation to which this has happened. They are crammed into a shelter. Meanwhile, they are hampered by orders from headquarters. The soldiers, Liraz in particular, want to be able to fight back. Instead, they are prevented by orders. Liraz finds this frustrating. Another example is that Liraz was unable to rescue his best friend. Instead, the medic had to do it. I am sure that Liraz felt that he had abandoned his friend when he needed him the most. In this movie, there were multiple sides that abandoned the men. The country had abandoned them to their fate, as had the military. This is seen when the soldiers are instructed to remain in a fortress set to explode. It is not clear why. However, it was probably due to politics. When the fortress is blown up, the names which are inscribed on a plaque of those who have died are also torched. It is as if they left behind the soldiers who died on the mountain.

In *Kippur*, the soldiers are fighting in the *Yom Kippur War*. The entire story smacks of disorganization. The soldiers are left to fend for themselves in many ways. There isn't any transport to the duty station. Instead, they are forced to drive their own cars through the battlefield. This initial battlefield is in Israel. The Syrians have already started their attack. For example, the doctor is forced to leave behind a soldier. In addition, the pilot's friend is either taken prisoner by the enemy or dead. Nobody knows which it is. The two main characters are unable to find their units. This is why they join the Air Force. At the end of the movie, you do not see some of the soldiers; is this because they have been killed.

In the last movie we viewed, *Waltz with Bashir*, the main character is isolated in many ways. He is adrift, even from his memories. Indeed, he is incapable of remembering the entirety of the

war. This results in him relying on the memories of others. So, he travels to visit former comrades who fills him in on what happened so many years ago during the war. Eventually, he meets with a psychiatrist who informs him that traumatic events can have various side effects. In the case of the main character, it results in repressed memories. I would say that in this movie the sense of abandonment was at a more personal level. The main character is alone, even isolated from his memories. The other sense of abandonment concerns the civilian victims of the war. They were forgotten by the Israeli military as they were killed in the camps. It seemed to be a case of "I did not see it; therefore, it did not occur." The massacre was eventually stopped under the orders of an Israeli general.

References

Munk, Yael. "In Search of Lost Time: First Lebanon War History According to Three Israeli Films." *Adcan* 54 (2011): 25-28. *Openet*. Open University. Web.
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