

1967 and After: An Introduction

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On June 5, 1967, a brief but consequential war began between Israel and the countries of the Arab League led by Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser. By June 10, the war had ended, but the territorial and social configuration of the region remains deeply impacted by this war. This book is the result of an interdisciplinary project on the personal narratives about 1967 – the Six-Day War or *al-Naksa* – as experienced in the complex terrain of the Middle East. Scholars of folklore, cultural anthropology and sociology working in Israel, Palestine and Germany brought their efforts together to elicit stories and document personal voices from many different groups and political and religious positionalities within Israel and the Palestinian territories. A large corpus of interviews has come together: More than three hundred conversations were conducted with Israelis and Palestinian-Israelis living mainly in Jerusalem and its environs, and Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, Ramallah and other West Bank locations, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, as well as in Germany. We present case studies of some of this rich material in this volume. We offer analyses of exemplary individual stories, thematic narrative clusters and sets of stories that are marked by gender, class, religion, age and political orientation. In addition, we include a number of interview transcriptions in slightly curated form to show how individuals recall and interpret the events of 1967 and embed them in their biographical recollections.

Of course, 1967 has been written about extensively within international relations, Middle Eastern studies, history, various fields of cultural studies and the social sciences. There are literary works, poetry and music that continue to make the

enormous and lasting impact of this very brief war manifest.¹ However, personal stories of individuals who have lived through this conflict, indeed, whose lives have been shaped and thoroughly changed by it, have rarely reached a broad audience.

After the founding of the state of Israel and the war of independence, 1967 represents a caesura in the unfolding history of tension and violence. It left a mark in lives full of memories that is worthy of attention and analysis to, perhaps, gain insights that might increase mutual understanding.

Exemplarily, A.Y., born in 1941, recalls:

There was an opportunity that was missed by the governments then, they needed to do something. [...] The Arab, the Palestinian people who were here, wanted to live. Quietly. And they thought that quiet would come now after the war. [...] All in all that's what created this sense of euphoria. Because, once I see him and he accepts me and says to me 'Hello, welcome!' I feel good, and I'm not afraid of him and he's not afraid of me, it's fun.²

A.Y. also recalls that before the war of independence,

We would go regularly to the Old City and buy things cheaply. And Arabs would come to us and sell oil, cheese, olives, and it was okay. All in all. Now, what's okay? I tell you, as kids we started to like them, we walked around with *Keffiyehs* like the Palestinians walk around with today!³

For some interviewees, perhaps the more liberal Jews, the sense of possibility and shared humanity brought on in the first weeks and months after June 1967, stands out starkly: "I thought it was good for us, great, I was in such a euphoria, what could I tell you. Everybody felt amazing. We were in a state of, what could I tell you, we were on such a high!"⁴

The Palestinian I.B. was six in 1967, and in his memory, a rather different reality unfolded. He was hiding in a cave with female adults and other children of his extended family during the first days of the war, and subsequently heeded his mother's words not to accept any chocolates from Israeli soldiers – a caution recalled by many Palestinians. After the war, the family divided, with but a few staying in Bethlehem and the rest moving to Jordan: "Because the life was terrible here at that time. Everywhere you went you could see the soldiers, soldiers, Israeli soldiers, you know? They were coming to your house and checking and asking and so on. Even my grandmother and my grandfather left."⁵ F. who was a nine-year-old Palestinian girl

¹ A selection pertinent to this project: Aly, Feldman and Shikaki (2013), Bein and Stein (2006), Benvenisti (1995), Buber (2005[1983]), Oren (2002), Finkelstein (2003), Said (1985), Saunders (2011, 2015), Scham, Salem and Pogrud (2005) and Segev (2006).

² A.Y., male, Israeli Jew, interviewed in February 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ L.M., female, Israeli Jew, interviewed in May 2017.

⁵ I.B., male, Palestinian, interviewed in February 2017.

in 1967, recalls how the West Bank city of Jenin began to flourish and hope was in the air:

Many Israelis came from Haifa, from Nazareth, and went shopping in Jenin. [...] Then you learn about relatives in Nazareth and so on, then the families visited each other again, and that was [...] a time when people had hope again. Many said that this is only temporary, the Israelis will soon leave and then we will have our country again.⁶

While I.B. also recalls a brief period of time with no checkpoints and opportunities to go to Tel Aviv or to Haifa, the weight of fifty years of occupation colors the memories of this short period of freedom:

People of the two nations, they can live together. Because we had the experience, you know? People there [...] if you are a human being, you are a human being. So what if you are Israeli, you are a Jew, you are a Muslim, and you are a Christian, and so on. Ok? We can live together. But we can't live together, they have their own state, and we're living under occupation. This is not fair.⁷

While politically, there was no attention paid to the deep impact of “1967 and after” experiences on personal and familial levels, peace-making initiatives on the social level have time and again called for witnessing and listening to one another in cases requiring an overcoming of deep conflict and atrocities in Israel/Palestine as well as elsewhere.⁸ There was, however, little by way of archival record of personal narratives.

When Hagar Salamon, Aziz Haidar and Regina F. Bendix came together in 2014-15 to begin drafting a joint grant, 1967 was hardly talked about regarding its everyday ramifications in Israeli and Palestinian society. Too many other wars layered themselves over those few days in June 1967 and the brief time period after it that initially seemed to hold the potential for transformations. Making audible and graspable moments within these dramatic days and their repercussions in individual biographies became the focus of our joint project, and some facets of the rich material collected are presented here. Behind more than fifty years of political discussion about one or two state solutions, punctuated by continued violent altercations and peace efforts, there are individuals of all walks of life, practicing diverse beliefs, and adhering to divergent political orientations, who have been deeply affected by this brief war. The motivation of our project, with interviews carried out between 2016 and 2020, was to make these vernacular experiences visible to a broader public within and beyond the conflict zone. In a time when ‘fake news’ is the byline of populist leaders who make use of it on a daily basis, the role of the media in shaping political presents and futures is understood. Yet, where in the assessments of the Six-Day War does the

⁶ F., female, Palestinian emigrated to Germany, interviewed in September 2019.

⁷ I.B., male, Palestinian, interviewed in February 2017.

⁸ Bar-On (2006, 2007), Bar-On and Adwan (2006), Bozizevic (2007), Rill, Šmidling and Bitoljanu (2007), Rill and Franovic (2005).

Egyptian newscaster Ahmed Sa'ïd figure, whose broadcasts were mentioned in interviews with Palestinians and Israelis alike, as an immensely powerful radio voice instilling fear in Israelis and hope of an impending Palestinian state among Arabs? The recollections of days spent in caves far from their villages, nurtured by mothers, aunts and grandmothers, offer trenchant images of Palestinian children and youths' experiences of impending uncertain futures. The role of the Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum's voice and her endorsement of Abdel Nasser's plans for an end to the Israeli state is another significant vernacular recollection, as is the image of Israelis driven into the sea as fodder for the fish – a picture of hope for Palestinians yearning to recover land and homes they had lost in 1948, and an image from childhood still lingering in some Israeli adults' nightmares. Atrocities live powerfully and dreadfully in narrative and memory and reemerge when war threatens to erupt, be this of massacres against Jews in the 1929 Palestine riots in Hebron, against Palestinians during the Israeli war of independence or in the Holocaust during World War II. It is often narrative and the specters that it upholds that guide the actions of those who are caught as civilians between warring powers.

Wars are likely to become life-changing events, no matter where they happen. Yet, the terrain considered here is paradigmatic in its long history of religious and colonial struggles, and its production of large streams of refugees and diasporas. The 1967 war, with the anger and anxiety leading up to it and the failure to achieve a lasting peaceful solution after the war concluded, affected countless individuals personally. There are those who lost houses and land, there are others who gained property and land,⁹ while the illegitimate Israeli settlements on occupied territory remain a steadily growing source of aggression and frustration.¹⁰ There are Palestinians who have improved themselves economically, yet, who desire nothing more than to return to the land of their family. There are Israelis who keep yearning for a religious miracle settling things once and for all, and those who hold by a secular, humanly just solution that would facilitate coexistence no matter what creed and origin. Biographies unfolded in decades of political uncertainty, with everyday life striving for an orderly reality, despite the fact that this frail if vibrant order has been shaken time and again by small and big altercations. We focus on regular people's ways of making sense of 1967 by dwelling on their remembrance. The global players, aligning

⁹ The loss of homes and land was far more pronounced in 1948, but it also occurred in 1967, and is a topos, sometimes interwoven with the preceding history, in a number of our interviews. The chapters by Salamon and Shaked and the narrative collected by Haidar in this volume contain such cases.

¹⁰ The settlements were rarely touched on by interviewees in this project and, hence, are discussed but rarely in this volume (but see the contribution by Ronit Hemyan). However, they illustrate the complex intermeshing of political oppositionality and economic interdependence. Palestinians find work in road and house construction, and in needing to labor to support their families, they simultaneously assist in the destruction of Palestinian farmland, access to property and wells, and so forth. Israelis, in turn, are deeply divided amongst each other, with many recognizing the settlements as a continued breach of international law. The Palestinian trauma of 1948, reverberating for many Palestinians in 1967, finds a parallel in many young Israelis' psychological turmoil when during their long mandatory military service they find themselves stationed to protect settlements whose existence they do not politically support.

between what appears on the political stage as two sides, recede in the narratives collected in this project. We confront, instead, the expertise of individuals who have experienced the few days of the 1967 war and who have endured 'the situation' since, with the researchers themselves bringing their own experience and historical-political awareness to the project.

This introduction briefly outlines the broader context of the 1967 war, before turning to scholarship on narration and how individuals, in crafting stories, seek to give voice to their experiences. Narration is a fundamental human skill for looking back and moving forward, and it holds particular relevance in overcoming great, even catastrophic events. Stories need to be told as well as heard to have a cathartic or healing effect (Lindahl 2012; Rosenthal 2003), however, not all such experiences find narrative contours, and not all narrators seek to heal. While many projects of scholarly and applied nature have been and continue to be launched to achieve peace and understanding in Israel and Palestine, we cannot expect that our endeavor is more than any other contribution toward that goal. Our project was motivated not least by the realization that 1967 held experiences that many people rarely if ever talked about. To be sure, the broad stroke of events is present in the public sphere, but the personal experiences were sometimes not even told within the family.¹¹ For some interlocutors, the interviews in the framework of this project turned out to be the first context to formulate personal memories in the shape of a (told) story.

1967

Considering the arrival of June 5, 1967, the first day of the war, includes, naturally, both historical and immediate issues. These are recalled and brought to the fore differently, depending on one's position. There is a deep historico-political history background to this short war, including the aftermath of colonial powers' poor judgment of local histories and cultural-religious diversities. The Middle East has primary status for poorly formulated decrees and all too quickly made decisions: it combines problematic and short-sighted actions with all potential forms of physical and mental violence and lasting desolation. The region is also the cradle of three of the world's major religions, comprising sites of enormous religious significance to each, some of them shared, many of them not. But this volume's focus is on 1967, and in the following, we describe the different perspectives on the lead-up to the war and the events unfolding within it, first from an Israeli and a Palestinian perspective. It is these generalized perspectives which already point to the different trajectories of retrospection, of relevant dates, sites and nomenclature that inform horizons of remembering.

¹¹ A dynamic of building silences around conflict, from the familial to the societal, seemed to set in over the first years, as has been researched for other conflicts (e.g. Hrobat Virloget and Škrbić Alemi-jević 2021; Kidron 2009; Robben 1996; Savolainen 2017; Seljama and Siim 2016).

For Israelis, the sequence of events that led to the war commenced on May 15, 1967, Israel's 19th Independence Day, with news received by Israel Intelligence regarding the influx of Egyptian forces crossing the Suez Canal into the Sinai Peninsula. This was considered a threatening breach of the silent consent reached between the two countries following ceasefire agreements after the Sinai war of 1956 regarding the demilitarization of this region. During the months prior to this influx, tension between Israel and Syria over the control of the Jordan River's water sources increased. The president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, considered to be the leader of the Pan-Arabian Arab League, claimed that the League was preparing for a confrontation of all Arab people with Israel. Egypt seems to have understood that its moves would induce Israel to prepare to war.

As a result, on May 19, 1967, Israel announced a general mobilization of its reserve forces, thus, increasing the already strained atmosphere. Tensions escalated when on May 23, Gamal Abdel Nasser expelled the UN Peace Corps from the Sinai and announced the closure of the Straits of Tiran, thus, blocking Israel's access through its southern and sole Red Sea harbor. With this move, Nasser stated that his country was ready for a confrontation with Israel. In the following days, a secret military cooperation agreement was also signed between Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

Israelis call the three weeks from mid-May to June 5, 1967, the "waiting period." It was a tense time, loaded with a sense of existential threat, anxiety regarding the fate of the State of Israel, including the fear of its total destruction.¹² As a result, the war was understood by most Israelis as a "war of no choice" (Segev 2006).

On June 5, about ten days after the conscription was completed, the Israeli Air Force launched a surprise air strike on the Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi Air Forces and Armored Forces, and then the Israeli Defense Forces conquered the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip. As soon as the Kingdom of Jordan joined the war, all territory west of the Jordan River was captured, including east Jerusalem, and the Old City, including the 'Temple Mount' and the 'Western Wall,' as these sites are called by Israelis. In the last days of the war, Israel also conquered the 'Syrian heights,' to gain security for the Israeli settlements that were under continuous shooting and shell bombing by Syrian forces. Thus, within only six days, Israel had tripled its territory, inflicted utmost damage on its enemies' immediate military capability, while suffering a relatively low number of casualties and losses. This decisive and fast victory positioned Israel as a significant force in the region.

The sharp transition from fear of extermination to a phenomenal military victory engendered in the Israeli public mood what is often described as extreme euphoria. The transition of Israel from its limited 1949 ceasefire borders to the control of the territories gained during the war was perceived by many Israelis and beyond as a

¹² This is the commonly accepted narrative, and indeed also appeared in many of the personal stories we heard. For a recent study on the morale of the Israeli public during this period as reflected in real time polls, see Heilbronner (2019).

‘return’ to the Biblical ‘Promised Land.’ More than 50 years later, it is obvious that the lives of all inhabitants – Israelis and Palestinian alike – have altered dramatically.

For Palestinians, June 1967 is the beginning of the third Arab-Israeli war, at the end of which Israel occupied the Sinai, the Syrian Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.¹³ What Israelis call the Six-Day War became known in the Arab world as *Naksa*, the “setback”; for many Arabs, especially Palestinians, it is *Hazima* (“defeat”). Many Palestinians, following the PLO Chairman Ahmad al-Shuqairi, called it “the Arab states’ betrayal” of the Palestinian cause.

In 1963, Israel decided to divert the path of the Jordan River. Little in the regional political climate pointed to another war on the horizon. Water is a crucial resource and a reaction was to be expected. The Arab Summit in Cairo in January 1964 announced plans to divert the headwaters of the Jordan, establish a unified Arab military command, and establish a Palestinian political entity. In the spring of 1967, tensions escalated. Syria had continued to offer support to Palestinian militants and had signed a mutual defense pact with Egypt in November 1966. Israel now threatened to launch a wide-scale attack on Syria. On April 7, 1967, Israel made good on its threats, launching attacks on Syrian border areas while Israeli aircraft clashed with Syria’s over Damascus, destroying several jet fighters.

Faced with the growing possibility of a full-scale Israeli assault on Syria, and especially after having received information from the Soviet Union on May 13, 1967, that Israel had amassed significant forces along the Syrian border, the Egyptian government announced on May 15 that it was placing its armed forces on alert. On the same day, Egypt requested that the UN Emergency Force – established following the 1956 war – withdraw from Sharm al-Shaykh (a city located on the southern tip of the Sinai) and Gaza. On May 22, Egypt’s government announced that the Straits of Tiran (at the Gulf of Aqaba’s entrance to the Red Sea) would be closed to Israeli shipping. The Palestinian populations were appraised of this escalation through newspaper and radio coverage. Particularly the broadcasts of Egypt’s president Gamal Abdel Nasser created an atmosphere of hope, even euphoria: soon the lands lost in 1948 would be recovered thanks to the support of the Arab League. Jordan joined the mutual defense treaty between Egypt and Syria on May 30. On the morning of June 5, 1967, Israel launched a surprise attack on Egyptian airfields that lasted more than two hours, during which it nearly completely destroyed Egypt’s air force and damaged Egyptian runways. Battles in the West Bank led to a widespread displacement of the population there, especially from Palestinian refugee camps in the Jordan Valley. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip attempted to flee toward the West

¹³ Co-PI Aziz Haidar has selected the following excerpt from the webpage “Palestinian Journeys” <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/timeline/highlight/163/june-1967-war> (accessed January 11, 2022) with a few changes in the wording and a few deletions and additions. The segment offers the Palestinian perspective on the years and months leading up to 1967. The homepage overall contains detailed information on the history of Palestinians, put together by the Institute for Palestinian Studies as part of a joint project with the Palestinian Museum.

Bank and from there to Jordan, while in the Golan Heights, Israeli forces expelled the majority of the Syrian residents.

The Arab summit issued the famous “Khartoum Statement,” which affirmed the determination of the Arab states to act collectively to secure the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied after June 5, 1967, “within the framework of the main principles by which the Arab States abide, namely, no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it, and insistence on the rights of the Palestinian people in their own country.”¹⁴

On November 22, 1967, after five months of deliberations, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242. Proposed by Britain’s representative, it stressed the necessity of Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories it had occupied during the war in exchange for an end to the state of hostility; recognition of the right of all countries in the region to live in peace within secure borders; freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba; and a just resolution to the refugee problem.

The June 1967 war had provided Israel with an opportunity to realize its goals of regional expansion. The Zionist leadership had never regarded the borders that emerged after the 1948 as permanent and hoped to reassert its claims over what had slipped away in 1956. Moving quickly to reap the fruits of victory, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and began, in the early days of its occupation, to establish Jewish settlements there and in the Golan Heights. This setback/defeat came on both a Palestinian level, as the remainder of the lands of historic Palestine came under Israeli military rule, and on a regional level, as territories of three Arab states were now occupied and the lofty aspirations of Arab unity seemed more distant than ever.

The failure to resolve and end the occupation of Palestinian lands, coupled with the relentless building of ever more settlements weighs heavily not only on the public sphere; it weighs heavily on the interviewees within our project – those who ‘lost’ as much as those who ‘won.’ Israelis had been both anxious and emboldened in 1967 by Egyptian broadcasts that announced Israelis would be driven into the sea and turned into food for the fish. Conversely, Palestinians had been filled with hope by the vigor and charisma of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and his promise of an alliance of Arab states coming to rectify their territorial losses of ’48. Many Palestinians, within Israel, the West Bank, Gaza and the Palestinian global diaspora, remain hurt and incensed, trying to understand how the promise of Nasserism could have dissipated so quickly. They struggle against the enduring occupation, its associated acts of dispossession, loss of land and violence, and the seemingly eternal impasse to reach a two-state solution, or to reach any solution.

1967 was a small window where human rapprochement seemed, to some, possible, and where that possibility could have been built on to make it feasible for

¹⁴ Cited after the text of the Khartoum Resolution, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khartoum_Resolution (accessed January 18, 2022); Meital (2000) offers a reassessment regarding the “three nos” for which the resolution was famous.

many. It was a time of uncertainty, with Israel not just winning the war but climbing out of a pressing economic recession that had led many Israelis to abandon the 'Promised Land.' During its short existence as a state, Israel had up until 1967 only begun to address its diverse cultural identities and personal tragedies that were struggling to build a new life. Palestinians emerged from the Jordanian protectorate that had lasted from 1948 onward. Not everyone had savored it, particularly as it also left Palestinians largely as unarmed witnesses to military confrontation, unable to act for themselves. With Israel taking over the occupation of the Palestinian terrain in 1967, Palestinians witnessed the amenities and opportunities of the highly modern Israel, within which many found opportunities to work, while others faced increased obstacles to pursue their way of life. Palestinians who had remained in Israel after 1948, Arab-Israelis, experienced and possibly also expressed the deepening ambiguity vis-à-vis their West Bank and Gaza neighbors in ethnicity, loyalty and/or faith. This split is an enduring issue of Palestinian cohesion and it hardened throughout the occupation, as has been explored by anthropologist Amal Bishara (2013, 2015, 2016). Arab Christians, finally, in- and outside of Israel proper and dwindling in numbers, had to readjust their comportment and hold a position ranging from mediator to extreme outsider.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict, therefore, did not start in 1967. However, the 1967 war constituted a major 'game changer' and a focal concern in any future resolution. Although they do not parallel the UN partition lines of 1947, the '67 lines' – those that preceded the 1967 war – became a basic point of departure for the discussion of the future partition of the area west of the Jordan River. Their centrality is a concrete manifestation of the status of the 1967 war in the interactive discourses projecting the future of relationships between Israelis and Palestinians (and their other neighbors), evident in research on subsequent accommodations and altercations along these lines (Bowman 2004; Segev 2006). Like many other concepts formed by political realities in this area, the diversity of the historical experience takes form even in the names given to events by different groups: the War of 67, *Al-Naksah* or the *Naksa* (the setback), and the Six-Day War.

The residents of the region were thrown into an immediate neighboring relationship without any respite to process the events, and the ensuing years of interaction were tragically marked by the rawness of the confrontation in the context of the Israeli control – or occupation – of Palestinian lands and their inhabitants. It is the accumulated memory work of more than five decades performed by both societies, separately as well as in mutual communication, that we sought to study. There has been research done on the impact of experiences of violence and suffering in the region.¹⁵ Our project built primarily on the potentials of narrative research, augmented by memory scholarship.

¹⁵ E.g. Brunner (2014), Kanaana (1976), Peteet (1994, 1996), Pitcher (1998).

Narrative in Times and Zones of Conflict

Humans endow their lived reality with meaning and establish their world view by constructing narratives; hence, such narratives are at the heart of the project. Fields of research that specialize in everyday life experiences, practices and related perceptions contribute alternative and additional perspectives on this conflict (e.g. Becker 2017; Hercbergs 2018). While too often ignored, they are capable of differentiating what appears like two hardened fronts into variegated realms of complex and, at times, interwoven experiences and memories. The project reflected in this volume focused, therefore, on stories: the tales told by both Palestinians and Israelis relating to the separate experiences, encounters and interactions between the two peoples – made up in actuality of multiple, intersecting groups.¹⁶ With the 1967 war as the focal point in our project, we investigated how personal stories are interlaced with accounts of events defined by ‘big politics,’ such as the months before that war, the war itself and its immediate impact, as well as the unfolding of joint and separate lives in the ensuing decades.¹⁷

The pivotal role of narration in human existence and social relationships has long been established and repeatedly summarized.¹⁸ Stories do not only come in the complex generic forms privileged by the majority of narrative research; everyday narratives often structure inchoate experience and serve multiple needs in familial and neighborly relationships as well as in conceptualizing personal biography and communal history.¹⁹ Our work was inspired particularly by studies from the extensive body on narrative research that have focused on the intertwining of narrative and conflict. As a background, extant collections and analysis of Israeli and Palestinian folk narratives provide an insight into salient motifs and storytelling characteristics.²⁰ Literary and documentary works also add compelling framing to the work presented here.²¹ But the everyday stories central to this project needed to be elicited predominantly in narrative interviews with strong biographical components; many had never been fully voiced.

The capacity of narrative to firm up and support individual and sociocultural identity has been a repeated focus of scholarly congresses (e.g., ISFNR 1995; Jacobson-Widding 1983; Voigt 1995), a factor crucial for identity discussion in lives and places studied in our project (cf. Robert, Schlicht and Saleem 2010). Yet, such identity work is easily instrumentalized for goals exceeding individual life and agency. Narrative contributes to conflict through its capacity to gather salient, traditional tropes, rhetorically sharpening positions and inciting aggression, as has been shown

¹⁶ Clarke (2000), Haidar (1988), Kailani (2007), Qleibo (1992), Slyomovics (1998).

¹⁷ Flug and Schäuble (2007), Gur (2002), Harms and Ferry (2012), Stein (2008a, 2008b).

¹⁸ E.g. Bendix (1996), Dundes (1971), Hymes (1975b), Niles (2010), Scheub (1998).

¹⁹ Bausinger (1958), Byng-Hall (1990), Lehmann (1983), Stahl (1989), White (1998).

²⁰ E.g. Bar-Yitzhak (2005), Ben-Amos (2006, 2007, 2011), Kanaana and Muhawi (1989), Noy and Ben-Amos (1963), Yassif (1999).

²¹ E.g. Amiry (2014), Barzilai (2002), Briggs (1988), Lousky (2015), Makdisi (2008), Roberts (2013), Shapira (1970).

in work on the confluence of folklore and nation building, as well as ethnonationalism.²² Narrative, however, is also essential for coping with conflict and trauma in personal and professional lives (Ancelet, Gaudet and Lindahl 2013; Norkunas 2004; Tangherlini 1998) as well as trauma inflicted by conflict and its aftermath, such as rains of terror (Robben 2005, 2018), and refugee and asylum situations.²³ In this capacity, as Didier Fassin has shown, trauma testimony, including who is permitted to testify and where, is also subject to instrumentalizing turns (2008; cf. also Briggs 2005).

It is, therefore, not surprising that anthropologist Michael Jackson endeavored to theorize a politics of storytelling that is built particularly on stories of broken life journeys, victims of violence and war, and refugees whose need to “be part of some kindred community” is “violently sundered” (2006: 33–34). He asked, “what power storytelling has [...] to help mend broken lives” (ibid.). In a time when traditional cultural expressions, such as bodies of narrative, have become potential elements of intangible heritage – a regime of cultural politics that emphasizes (national and/or ethnic) difference over shared humanity (cf. Herzfeld 2005) – it is particularly relevant to document and examine stories in the dynamic flow of lives lived, as once called for by Dell Hymes (1975b), and rearticulated and adjusted to a time that is keen on the vernacular yet inept to handle it with care (Goldstein 2015).

Narrative, furthermore, is a favored medium for transporting or even learning how to verbalize memory. With our project, we hoped to facilitate what Dell Hymes called a breakthrough into performance (1975a). Drawing on the analytic repertoire of narrative performance studies (Bauman 1984, 2004; Kapchan 1995), bringing together the politics of storytelling with the work of memory requires attention to the dangers inherent to speech and to the act of evoking it (Brenneis and Meyers 1984). Memory is an individual, private experience, while also being part of a collective domain. Two schools of thought have emerged regarding the role of memory: one articulates that the present shapes our understanding of the past,²⁴ and the other assumes that the past has an influence on our present behavior.²⁵ Gadi Algazi in his introduction to a special issue of *History and Memory* dedicated to the Palestinian memory, powerfully expresses the need to “move discussions of memory from monumental and official representations of the past to the manifold ways it intrudes into everyday life, to its lay users, humble bearers, and their ways of coming to terms with history and its scars” (2006). Such a turn away from the official to the everyday remembrance for the millions of individuals of all walks of life living in the embattled territory of Israel/Palestine, might, at the very least, contribute to the visibility of individual and familial experience next to the monumental.

²² E.g. Bhabha (1990), Bausinger (1965), Bowman (2003), Gingrich and Banks (2007), Hosking (1996), Kaschuba (2012), Stagl (1999), Wilson (1976).

²³ E.g. Blommaert (2010), Shemak (2013), Shuman and Bohner (2012), Westerman (1998).

²⁴ Assmann (1992), Hercbergs (2018), Kansteiner (2002), Swedenburg (2003).

²⁵ Schudson (1989), Schwartz (1991); cf. Collins (2004), Erl (2011).

The project was devoted to very different ‘memory cultures,’ all the while aspiring to find moments of opening and intertwining. Jewish culture, shaped in a long-term diaspora, has incorporated ‘memory’ in its daily routine,²⁶ while Palestinian society has had its own traditional ways of memorizing. Today, mainly as a result of recent displacements, it is finding new ways to work with memory.²⁷ However, we can also detect that the two memory cultures are influencing each other, so that the patterns of processing memory and commemoration become increasingly intertwined.²⁸ This body of research formed a backdrop to understand the materials collected in each community better, but our cooperative endeavor aimed to reach a stage where hitherto unacknowledged threads of mutual influence and memory-building might be identified. Some previous studies in comparable situations provided guidance and direction for our project, though each situation and each location have their own unique contextualization.

Researching and Interviewing across Different Dispositions

The project’s trilateral configuration owes its existence to the German Research Foundation’s initiative to award funds to projects crossing the political and historical divide between Israeli and Palestinian scholars, with scholars working in Germany as participants, mediators and go-betweens. Bridging the political and social rifts between participants is not always easy, even for projects in the natural sciences and medicine.²⁹ Regarding a project addressing one of the major points of origin for the lasting tensions between Palestinians and Israelis, recruiting junior scholars to participate in the research on 1967 and after made for a variety of foreseeable and unforeseeable hurdles and occasional unsurmountable walls. A Palestinian scholar participating in such an arrangement already constitutes a major problem, eased in our case due to Aziz Haidar’s affiliation not only with the Palestinian Al-Quds University but also with the Truman Institute at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which is specifically dedicated to the advancement of peace. Hagar Salamon is also affiliated with this institute, thus, a good and somewhat neutral site for anchoring the project was found. Recruiting Palestinian students to engage with the research was far more difficult than waking the interest of young Israelis, though among them, too, there were occasional reservations. Bendix, though specialized in narrative research and familiar with the complexities of interdisciplinary arrangements, was herself new to the intricacies of this Middle Eastern conflict. Tasked, in part, to accompany the

²⁶ Azaryahu (1995), Myers and Funkenstein (1992), Yerushalmi (1982), Zerubavel (1994, 1995).

²⁷ Ben-Ze’ev (2011), Feldman (2006), Furani and Rabinowitz (2011), Jean-Klein (2000), Litvak (1994), Swedenburg (1991).

²⁸ Allen (2006, 2009), Hasan-Rokem (2003), Katriel (1994), Salamon (2016), Stein (2008b).

²⁹ Regina F. Bendix’s part project in the present venture was specifically designed to investigate the workings of such endeavors geared both toward basic scholarship and peacemaking. Interviews she conducted with participants in this project as well as with principle investigators and participants in other projects funded through this scheme were analyzed in Herhaus’ master thesis of 2020.

research process, she stumbled into numerous unexamined dispositions that, due to her questioning, led to discomfort.³⁰ There was the young Israeli who was incensed when Bendix argued that Irgun, a Zionist paramilitary organization active until 1948, appeared to have used the same methods as the PLO and other Palestinian paramilitary groups. The young woman's great-grandfather, whom she admired, had been active in Irgun, and being encouraged to see parallels in terrorist aggression seeking the establishment of a state seemed to be at least one reason for her to exit the project. There were some Israeli students who saw themselves as activists on behalf of Palestinian villagers or, at the very least, as strong supporters for Palestinian rights, but who acknowledged their everyday fears of becoming potential victims of Palestinian suicide bombers. Numerous Palestinian students contemplated joining the team but withdrew again because they could not fathom how to explain both to their relations and potential interviewees that they were working in a joint project with Israelis. An Israeli student was invited to interview two older relations of one of his Palestinian friends; he was bombarded during the first part of the interview with sharp questions on what he had ever done for Palestinians and why they should share their remembrances with him. But another young Israeli woman found the project to be a most welcome opportunity to overcome the burden of her past military service. Herself a gifted sniper, she had trained others in this deadly skill, until she broke with this part of her biography and joined Neve Shalom – Wahat Al-Salam (lit. Oasis of Peace), a village practicing Jewish-Muslim coexistence. In the project, she hoped to deepen her sensibility for differential experiences of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A young Palestinian woman, in turn, stayed with the project for nearly a year, as she regarded it as an intellectual opportunity to broaden her sociopolitical engagement in Palestinian women's groups and an organization for the protection of depopulated Palestinian villages.³¹

³⁰ The following examples are drawn from Bendix's field diary, kept between 2016 and 2021, and interviews with project participants.

³¹ Peace studies have generated a considerable body of both theoretical and applied scholarship for joint work between members of conflict parties (among others Galtung 1989, 1996; Webel and Galtung 2009) and sharing opposing stories is an intrinsic component of peace education (Bekerman 2012). Hence, narrating "1967 and after" is accompanied by stories of separate and joint research experiences. In situations of conflict, international relations opt for observation and diplomacy, and especially the latter emphasizes deceleration (Bendix 2013). The trilateral grant arrangement brought with it the task of cooperating in research, exchanging insights and working toward joint results. The project design took this into consideration from the beginning and developed a meta-research angle that would accompany the team from the beginning, with Bendix, as the 'foreign' participant within the team, chronicling conversations with changing team members over the course of the project and keeping fieldnotes of both productive moments and long stretches of stagnation. Regarding research on interdisciplinarity, see Strathern (2004); furthermore, Etienne Wenger's concept "community of practice" (1998) is often applied for such research settings. Wenger's concept denotes how actors representing different spheres of training find ways of working with one another. In our case, with its precarious sociopolitical location and limited possibilities to work in close proximity, the opportunities of thinking and writing together were sparse.

Similarly, requests to engage in conversations about the War of 1967 engendered different reactions among potential interviewees. For many Palestinians, it meant overcoming considerable hesitations. Ronni Shaked, in this volume, summarizes his Palestinian interlocutor's initial resistance to the undertaking as follows: "His fear was twofold: Israelis might retaliate for the things he would say, and members of Palestinian society might perceive the interview as an act of treason and cooperation with the Jews." Nonetheless, this Palestinian eventually relayed his family's 1967 (and 1948) experiences, against the advice of his wife and extended family. There were some Palestinians both within Israel and the Palestinian territories who agreed to speak to Salamon, Shaked or even Bendix, though reaching across class and territorial borders was hard. Haidar, himself trained more in theoretical and quantitative sociology, ultimately felt it better to task a Palestinian NGO with carrying out the interviews. Given the all too understandable concerns and fears among Palestinians and the difficulty to reach out also to women, this approach avoided the overt connection with university researchers and embedded these interviews with general Palestinian interests to collect oral history. Given the lack of qualitative interview training on the part of the NGO staff, the interviews were generally shorter.

The enormous shadow of 1948, the *Nakba*, the catastrophe, appears in almost the entire Palestinian interview corpus; this event casts an insurmountable shadow on subsequent individual and collective remembrance even among interviewees born after 1948. Many Palestinians have lived at this point for several generations in refugee camps in surrounding states. Many who have made a new home for themselves outside Israeli territory in the West Bank, or who migrated abroad all over the world continue to yearn for their lost land and house. The keys to houses that no longer exist or that were taken over by Israeli settlers is the central symbol of this loss, mentioned in many Palestinian interviews, and prominently present in Palestinian museums and public art, for example, in Ramallah. On the background of this experience of loss, 1967 pales in the collective memory, it was, as *Naksa* translates, a setback in comparison to the *Nakba* that the founding of Israel entailed. There had been a nearly euphoric hope that the Arab League would destroy Israel in 1967, and this hope turned, initially, into overwhelming fear that Palestinians would suffer as they did in 1948. The suffering was, however, but limited, and for a number of Palestinian interviewees, 1967 initially held some, however restrained, hope that their lives might improve with the end of the Jordanian rule. However, at the time of the interviews, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian terrain had lasted five decades, with more and more Israeli settlements encroaching on the land. Though many Palestinian livelihoods have improved economically, there is a nostalgia for simple agrarian lives with close-by familial networks running through these interviews. While there were Palestinian interviewees in positions of authority who held up a flame for a better political future, and assessed the economic achievements of their village or even their people, there were others without hope, such as a shoemaker in Jerusalem's Old City. He showed the interviewers the different kinds of identity cards and a few bills of currency he still had from the Jordanian mandate time and then the

Israeli occupation, regarding the collection as traces of what kind of fate he had clearly been meant to endure. A tailor, interviewed in his small shop in the Old City, pointed to a fading photograph on the wall showing his family's land. He broke out in tears as he described his son's plans to leave for a better future away from Palestine; his family, more precious still than land, would be dispersed.³²

Many Israelis, by contrast, reacted enthusiastically to the proposition to talk about 1967. Even before the funding was granted, Hagar Salamon undertook initial interviews and she continued with vigor throughout the project. Starting with individuals suggested by acquaintances, the range of interviewees grew quickly. Advanced students participated, with some of them choosing to select aspects of the materials as focal points for their MA or PhD dissertations. Some Israeli interviewees had come to Israel before 1948, many had arrived after the founding of the state in that year. While the specter of the Holocaust and subsequent experiences of anti-semitic persecution in many parts of the world remain present in many of the interviewees' biographies, they spoke from within the framework of the founding of Israel as a state for Jews, believing and secular alike. The will to uphold the certainty of a home state – in contrast to the loss of precisely that certainty for Palestinians – also contributed to the way in which the Six-Day War was remembered in many interviews. At the end of 1966, Israel's population was 2,629,000,³³ the country was in a deep recession and, as some interviewees remember, there were sizable numbers of Israelis who had left the young state. Without exception, Jewish Israelis recalled the enormous turning point that this brief war constituted for the state. Fear and euphoria would seem to always have been coupled in war, but while the brief Palestinian prewar euphoria made way for fear and lasting uncertainty, Israeli fear, coupled with the determination to hold on to this land wrested for the Jewish people, made way for exuberance and euphoria. Through the many subsequent wars and confrontations, 1967 confirmed the viability of the young state and boosted confidence. In hindsight, a good number of interviewees felt that the chances for peaceful coexistence with Palestinians had been wasted, that the occupied territory should have been returned and made way for a two-state or even a one-state solution. But it is the initial joy of victory and the sudden opening of sites – many of them holy to the Jewish faith – and lands that had been inaccessible that is dominant in the recollections of the post Six-Day War weeks and months. If Palestinian interviewees invariably invoked the double trauma of *Nakba* and *Naksa*, Israeli interviews show that great individuality in 1967 was recalled, with differing social, political and religious emphases being foregrounded.

The project sought to invite interviewees to narrate their personal truth about 1967 and after. Different interview settings much as different personal dispositions of interviewees and interviewers alike may not have made it equally possible to

³² The shoemaker was interviewed by Salamon, Shaked and Bendix in February 2017 in Jerusalem; the tailor by Salamon and Bendix, also in Jerusalem, in February 2019.

³³ At the time of this writing, the population is 9,450,000.

verbalize such a truth in all the shades that individual memory acquires in the course of five decades. Yet, the conversations recorded have yielded rich material. They may not – and cannot – form a pleasing, uniform tapestry, as there are differences, divides and in some cases, deep chasms between individuals and groups in the terrain as it has unfolded since 1967.

The Chapters and Interviews Assembled in this Volume

The authors coming together in this volume in presenting and analyzing personal narratives of 1967 bring with them their disciplinary specializations, stages in professional development, and, unavoidably, their own relationship to the complexity of the terrain and its peoples. Correspondingly, we have allowed for the personal voice and particularities of approach to shine through the writing. Numerous individuals who participated in aspects of the project did not write, others joined specifically to elaborate sets of interviews into a contribution. Each contributor's point of departure is, thus, different and readers will indulge in this doubling of voices – those of chapter authors working with the voices recalling and bearing witness to 1967 and after. In the following, the contributions are briefly outlined and the logic of their sequence explained. There is no uniformity of remembrance within the Israeli and the Palestinian stories respectively, but the chapters illustrate the weight inherent in these contrasting experiences in individual lives and in shaping the everyday atmosphere among populations living adjacent to one another.

Interspersed among the analytic chapters are a total of eight interviews, with four drawn from the Palestinian sample and four from the Israeli one. It is not factuality that we strive for by including these transcriptions which stay close to the spoken word. Next to blow-by-blow accounts and key anecdotes, the voices represented here also make claims and report hearsay that have firmed up as truths within memory. It is the personal veracity of the 1967 and after experience that interviewers sought to elicit, and that captures some of the atmosphere of those six (or fewer) days and the ensuing weeks and months. Together with the chapters offering perspectives on different aspects of 1967 as represented in the empirical materials, the interviews are meant to strengthen the recognition of the manifold personal experiences and biographical impact of this crucial war for Israel and Palestine, and with them, for the entire region.

The sequence of contributions will now be briefly outlined.

The volume opens with Hagar Salamon's analysis of Israelis recalling the 'liberation' of the Western Wall (known also as the Wailing Wall). This holiest site of Judaism had been inaccessible to believers for nineteen years because the Old City of Jerusalem was part of the territory controlled by Jordan after the 1948 war's ceasefire. Salamon analyzes Jewish interviewees' recollections of their first visit to this site in the days and weeks after the Six-Day War. Their stories are accompanied by historical photographs illustrating the changing access and appearance of the Western

Wall. Individuals remember these moments differently, and the visit and the site are not exclusively positive for all of them, but the centrality of this monumental wall, considered a remnant of the destroyed Second Temple, in the Jewish faith is unmistakable. Israel did not just open passages for Israelis to enter into Jerusalem's Old City, it also bulldozed a complex of houses so as to enlarge the access to the Western Wall. Salamon's article is followed by an interview with A.M., a Palestinian, born in Jerusalem's Old City, whose family had to leave their house in what is today the Jewish Quarter. His memories of the war of 1967, prominently including what he experienced as a desecration of *Haram esh-Sharif* and the *Al-Aqsa* Compound (the Muslim names for what is the Temple Mount to Jews), wistfully span events and rumors as he has recalled and shared them in his lifelong work serving all religious communities in the city.

Ronni Shaked concentrates on the narrative of one Palestinian interviewee who, over several hours, generously and even humorously laid open his family's losses and dispersal since 1948. In presenting Muhammad Naji's experiences, Shaked brings to the fore what is present in almost all the papers concentrating on Palestinian narratives in the volume: the drama unfolding for Muhammad Naji in losing the family home in Imwas in 1967 was overshadowed by the expulsion from their home in Abu Ghosh in 1948. Although family members were, after long separation, reunited in Abu Ghosh, the destruction of Imwas and its transformation into a park turned into a further source of trauma and anger. This singular case exemplifies what many Palestinians born before 1948 bring to their perception of 1967: Less than two decades after the catastrophic experience of 1948, the renewed loss of homes, land and familial proximity showed most of all continuity in the plight of one's people. The shadow of the Nakba is, as the later chapters by Abed, Abumaizar and Awad show, omnipresent in Palestinian accounts of the 1967 War, though it gives rise to different kinds of agency and interpretation.

The interview of C.A., an Israeli born to Yemeni-Jewish parents, presents another view of the 1967 experience. C.A.'s mother spoke little Hebrew but fluent Arabic and blossomed personally and linguistically with the suddenly open exchange with Palestinians after the war. C.A. and her sisters embraced Palestinian clothes and dresses, wearing them not simply for their oriental and colorful beauty – as did many other Israeli women after 1967 – but also embracing their mother's origins.

Aziz Haidar interprets a Palestinian woman's story of a house on the border, built by her family and threatened with destruction by the Israeli army during the 1967 War. A deal was struck to leave the house standing, with the Israeli commander and his family seizing it for themselves. Haidar shows the ways in which the Palestinian family eventually takes possession again of their house in a painstaking struggle stretching out over decades and involving official, neighborly and familial twists and turns.

S.E. was interviewed as a representative of a national-religious group of Israelis. In her narrative, the Six-Day War turns into an event preceded by prophetic events and bringing forth opportunities to strengthen the faithful's hold on ancient Biblical

sites and pave the way toward the advent of the fabled Third Temple. She refers to a number of equally faithful Jewish men who served in the Israeli army during the Six-Day War who are at the center of Yiftah Levin's chapter. His interviewees recall how the keys to holy Jewish sites were "returned" to them at the height of the war. These narratives are all the more astounding as they feature Palestinians returning keys to Jews, thus, grabbing the iconic power of keys – so central to Palestinians who lost their homes in 1948 – and featuring Palestinians relieved to be able to return those massive keys to shrines and gates to their rightful Jewish owners. Levin interprets the interviewees' recollections in terms of the genre of the fantastic, as well as the structure of hero tales. Witnessed in this vein, the events fulfilled the ancient desire that was embodied within the representative sites. The Palestinian provided the Jewish narrators with the key, and by this, for them, the control of the site, opening a new era for both sides involved in the key's encounter.

The corpus of Palestinian interviews assembled during the project contains a sizable number of recollections by women. Salwa Alinat Abed's analysis pays particular attention to what elements women foreground in their narrations, and urges for greater recognition of women's strength and circumspection in holding together their family's needs during the long stretches of uncertainty not only in 1967 but also in the flight after 1948 and, for many, the decades of refugee life in between and since. She rightly points out how particularly the memories of uneducated, rural women has not entered official Palestinian memory construction, and while their recollections may not represent a strong deviation, the gender and class-based experiential difference enriches the emerging Palestinian national narrative. Abed's chapter is followed by the interview with B.L., an Israeli woman who immigrated newly married to Israel from the USA in 1947 and lived through the war of Independence and the Six-Day War. University educated and with strong ties to the Israeli Defense Forces, her recollections of June 1967 are, nonetheless, also dominated by a family event: She managed to arrange for guests and catering for her son's *bar mitzvah*, even though it took place during the two days leading up to the war's beginning. A.M., in turn, is a quite well-to-do Palestinian who lived through the war as a boy and returned to Ramallah after the family had initially fled to Jordan. Rather than women and children's flight to caves featuring prominently in many rural Palestinian recollections, A.M. recalls the flight by car, and waiting for an opportune time to return to make sure that his family's home and business would remain intact.

For Israelis, the short Six-Day War resulted correspondingly in relatively few casualties. But for those who did lose a loved one, grief in Israel's general atmosphere of victory was, as Bosmat Iby Hardy's chapter illustrates, debilitating precisely due to its muted expression. In contrast to the majority of the Israeli population, these women mourned a husband, son or brother, and found themselves alone and deeply alienated by their grief. The surrounding society celebrated the unexpectedly quick resolution and sweeping victory, while these bereaved were confronted by a huge loss, compounded by the fact that the bodies of these soldiers, given the war circumstances, had been buried without their presence. The difficulty to reach ritual

closure is evident in the ways in which these women's mourning continues, both in memory and in – sometimes hidden – private shrines for their lost ones.

The memory of 1948 leads to different decision-making in Screen Abumeizer's analysis of eight Palestinian interviews from East Jerusalem and Jordan. The specter of massacres suffered in villages such as Deir Yassin in 1948 generated so much fear for some Palestinians confronted with the imminent loss of the Arab forces to Israel in 1967 that flight appeared to be the best course of action. For others, the post 1948 refugee experience was so alienating that staying in one's home was of paramount importance, no matter the cost. Ward Awad, in his literary analysis of interview passages, deepens this decision-making process among 1948 Palestinians. Awad recognized a constant recollection and intertwining of land and loss, and the deep imprint left by 1948, the *Nakba*, in Palestinian narrators in the interviews he analyzed. Homes, villages and lands lost and the transformation of land-bound identities into those of refugees dictated for many how they experienced and acted in 1967. He draws on the psychology of identity formation, the importance of land and home ownership, the role that the Jewish other plays for Palestinians, and the ways in which this constitutive other differs for Palestinians who experienced neither 1948 nor a state of being refugees. The interview with the Palestinian Z.Z., between the chapters of Abumaizar and Awad, recounts the change that 1967 and the Israeli occupation had on the life plans of a young man. Z.Z., for various reasons and right after the war, decides to learn Hebrew along with a sizable group of other young Palestinians. One of these Palestinian classmates, whose mother was Jewish, became a terrorist. Z.Z. mentions this in passing; we opted to include an Israeli newspaper report on this individual, Kamal Al Nimri, especially as an illustration of the (interpretation of the) impact of mixed Palestinian-Jewish parentage on a young person. The following interview features A.C. who grew up in a Palestinian village directly adjacent to Mount Scopus – today the main campus of Hebrew University and at the time, an outpost of the Israeli Defense Forces within Jordanian mandate territory. A.C.'s detailed recollections of the Jordanian soldiers fight and withdrawal, the entry of the Israelis and how their lack of knowledge about village leadership structures led to the arrest and disappearance of one of his friends remains chilling.

Ronit Hemyan focuses her attention on Jewish father-daughter relationships in Hebron, the largest city in the West Bank. As Hebron is home to the Cave of the Patriarchs, a site holy to all three Abrahamic religion, it is also a site to which many Israelis flocked immediately after the end of the Six-Day War, and Jewish settlers had already forced their way into Hebron by 1968. Since 1997, the Hebron Protocol has placed one sector of the city under Israeli military administration. Hemyan portrays Jewish women of Hebron fathers and their very different filial and ideological stance toward their parentage. She features five individuals who position themselves quite differently vis-à-vis the ways in which Hebron and the grave of the Patriarchs became an immediate place of asserting Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. Her portraits bear witness to the deep divisions within Israeli society, also running

through families, regarding Jewish settlements within Palestinian terrain in general and in Hebron in particular

Her chapter is followed by the interview with the retired Israeli sound engineer A.Y., whose work for the radio also brought him into close proximity to the Israeli leadership during the 1967 war. His memories illustrate the changing thought processes of a passionate individual, growing up before 1948, deeply invested in Israel, yet also deeply regretting that the opportunities for lasting, peaceful arrangements afforded by 1967 were thrown aside.

Rumors are an intrinsic part both of the time leading up to war and the ways in which a war's outcome is contextualized and analyzed in the vernacular. Yuval Plotkin forges together scholarship on rumor and conspiracy with the rumors rampant in the whole corpus of interviews. The media, in this case radio, spurred on misconceptions leading up to and during the war. In hindsight, as Plotkin states, conspiracies and rumors were narrated by interviewees, irrespective of ethnicity or national affiliation, but more profusely so by the losing side as they provide "explanations for the current reality and afford a sense of control through narrative logic." Thus, the conspiracy stories allow Nasser's esteem to be maintained intact and blame his advisor for the kind of treason that could not but derail the Arab League's victory. Regina F. Bendix's paper asks to what extent personal narrative is able to attain a sense of closure after a war that remains so deeply consequential in multiply divided populations. While Israeli interviewees have fashioned stories from brief excerpts of this war's experiences, embedding them within ongoing biographical paths, many Palestinian narrators recall fragments of experiences, but circle from 1967 back to 1948, finding themselves to be in an epic that is still unfolding, on the backdrop of an often nostalgically painted rural past and in the midst of a presence that fails to provide safety and certainty.

A Note on Spellings

Most of the primary materials were recorded in Arabic and Hebrew. Transliterations have also differed depending on who was translating into English.

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