The denial of Palestinian National and Territorial Identity in Israeli Schoolbooks of History and Geography 1996-2003

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Abstract

This paper is part of a study which seeks to reveal social and educational ideologies through a multimodal analysis of textbooks. The analysis of ten Geography and History schoolbooks shows that in spite of different ways of teaching the discipline Israeli schoolbooks share a common ideological ground regarding the perpetuation of Jewish territorial and national identity. This identity relies heavily on the denial of any meaningful life in the Land of Israel or Palestine, other than the Jewish one.

The paper analyzes verbal and visual discourse, layout and the use of colour, all of which represent the Palestinians as a problem to be solved, a developmental burden, a demographic danger and a security threat.¹


1. Introduction

The sample of schoolbooks was chosen according to the popularity of the books among teachers in mainstream secular Jewish schools, which constitute the majority of schools in Israel.² All books were published in the years 1996-2003, after the Oslo Peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in 1994. All books are

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¹ I thank the following publishing houses for allowing me to use the visuals appearing in this paper: Mapa –Sifrei Tel-Aviv for using the visuals in The 20th Century and Modern Times II; The Centre for Educational Technology for using the visuals in People in Space, Settlements in Space and Israel-Man and Space; Lilach for using the visuals in The Geography of the Land of Israel . All rights are reserved to the publishers.

² Israeli schoolbooks are trade books and teachers may choose which book to use. However, they all need to be authorized by the Ministry of education or at least be compatible with the national curriculum. I chose the textbooks that were mostly bought according to bookstore reports.
currently used and all claim to reflect the national curriculum. All but one were authorized by the Ministry of Education

The paper presents examples of the ways Israeli textbooks erase, deny or distort the identity of Palestinians in visual and verbal discourse, and through layout and colour. The analysis of verbal discourse will follow the categories of racist discourse established by Van-Leeuwen (1996, 2000) and developed by Wodak and Reisigl (2001). The visual analysis will follow the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen and will include aspects such as Layout, maps, graphs and photographs (Van Leeuwen and Kress 1995, Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996), and the use of colour as a semiotic mode (Kress, G. and Van-Leeuwen, Th. 2002), all with regard to the presentation of Palestinians.

1.1. The nature of Israeli schoolbooks
School and schoolbooks are powerful means by which the state shapes forms of perception, of categorization, of interpretation and of memory, that serve to determine national identity. The discourse of identity is also the discourse of difference, inclusion and exclusion. The construal of identity includes strategies of denying other identities that seem threatening.

The Israeli national-territorial identity perpetuated in schoolbooks today is that of the New-Jew, who is described both as the direct descendent of biblical Hebrews and as a Western. This presentation is compatible with the Zionist ideal to establish in Israel "a European reserve in an Asiatic wilderness" (Bar-Gal, 1993a:168). The Israeli identity is promoted in schoolbooks (Bar-Gal 1993b:421, 2003), among other ways, through the exclusion and rejection of other ethnic groups – both Jewish and Arab - and by denying their national, territorial or cultural identity. The main rejected group is the Palestinian one, the 1 million citizens of the state and the 3.5 millions who live under military occupation. As Bar-Gal notes, "In the field of Geography the curricula has always emphasized the nationalist goals as the principal goal" (Bar-Gal, 2000:169). As this paper will show, this is all the more true in History textbooks.

Using the terms of G. Genette,(1982:12-14) schoolbooks are hypertexts both of the dominant socio-political hypotext and of their respective disciplinary hypotexts,

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3 The Geography of the Land of Israel does not have the authorization of the Ministry of Education, though it claims to be written according to the national curriculum and is sold and used in schools.

4 Prof. Bar-Gal is the head of the department of Geography and environmental studies in Haifa University.
hypertextuality being any relation a certain text B has with a previous text A from which it is derived or on which it is "grafted". Genette explains that this derivation can have many forms: Text B may not even mention text A but cannot exist without it, for it is its transformation.

Israeli History and Geography schoolbooks are hypertexts of their respective disciplinary hypotexts and of the hypotext of Zionism (Bar Gal 1993a, 2003, Firer 1985).

Israeli educational discourse is shaped by Zionist ideology and its convictions regarding the 'historic' Jewish rights on the Land, which make the state of Israel a direct successor of Biblical kingdoms⁵, the necessity of a Jewish majority in Israel, anti-Semitism and Arab hatred and the constant threat Palestinians constitute for Israel.

The examples in this paper are taken from different schoolbooks that vary in the ways they teach the discipline but share, as a "common ground" (Fairclough, 2003) the above mentioned convictions or "basic assumptions" (ibid.) upon which Israeli education is carved. All books justify the "lesser democracy" or "ethnic democracy" which prevails in Israel. As Smooha (2002:475-478) maintains, Israel is "A democracy which is propelled by an ideology or a movement of ethnic nationalism that declares a certain population as a nation sharing a common descent, a common language and a common culture. It also claims ownership of a certain territory that it considers its exclusive homeland… It is a diminished type of democracy for it takes the ethnic nation, not the citizenry, as the corner-stone of the state[…] In Israel the Jews appropriate the state and make it a tool to advance their national security, demography, public space, culture and interests. At the same time this democracy extends various kinds of [individual] rights to 1 million Palestinian-Arab citizens (16% of the population) who are perceived as a threat."

Since all the features listed above, such as common territory, common language and common culture, were not available to the modern Jewish nation, they had to be manufactured through education, for the purpose of building a collective homogenous identity to all its Jewish members.

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⁵ Even a recent study by R. Firer of the Truman Institute for peace asserts that 'the state of Israel was re-established in 1948'. Such a statement is nourished by an ideology that sees the current state of Israel as a direct successor of biblical kingdoms.(Firer, 2004:22)
1.2 Methodology

The study adopts the theory and tools of Social Semiotics, and relies mainly on the methods of multimodal analysis developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen\(^6\) whose basic assumption is, that every sign is motivated, and that

[...] representation is always "engaged". It is never neutral. That which is represented in sign or sign complexes realizes the interests, perspectives, values and positions of those who make the sign. [...] [The sign] must be fit for its role in the social field of communication (Kress, 2003:44).

1.3 The representation of Palestinians in Israeli schoolbooks

In a recent study of Israeli textbooks Firer (2004:75) claims that "as political correctness has reached Israel it is no longer appropriate to use blunt, discriminatory language in textbooks", and then adds that in the years 1967-1990 "the stereotypes of Arabs and Palestinians almost disappear" (ibid. p. 92). However, examining school books in the years 1996-2003, including the ones Firer praises most for political correctness, one cannot but notice that visually and verbally, Palestinians are still represented in a racist stereotypical way namely as an 'impersonalized' or excluded element. In Van Leeuwen's terms, Israeli schoolbooks represent Palestinians 'as types rather than as tokens [...] this reality is replacing the reality of naturalism and individualism.' (1992:56)

The Palestinian stereotypes are the caricaturistic racist icon of the 'Arab' wearing Kafieh and followed by a camel, 'Oxfam images' (Hicks, 1980:31) of primitive farmers, 'refugees' – barefoot and destitute people who carry their baggage on their heads, usually shown from a very long distance, situated in non-places such as unidentified roads or fields - and face-covered terrorists, namely the 'problems' or 'threats' they constitute for the Israelis: ('Asiatic') backwardness, terrorism and the refugee 'problem' which stains Israel's image in the eyes of the world and 'poisons' its relationships with other nations.\(^7\)

The denial of Palestinian identity can be re presented in one of the four categories offered by Thompson (1987):

**Legitimation:** expressions that are designed to immortalize dominance through its presentation as legitimate, i.e. the Jews have historic rights on Israel and Palestine, which are considered as one geographic entity, and are called in the Israeli


educational and socio-political discourse The Land of Israel. Within this entity, there is a state of Israel, which is presented as incomplete, or on the way to completion. Hence the redemption of the whole land is presented as a justified ideal and practical goal. A recurrent device of legitimization, both in the political and in the educational discourse, is the insertion of (irrefutable) biblical phrases. For instance, The Mediterranean Countries, a geography textbook for the 5th grade, mentions in the chapter One Sea with Many Names (pp.30-33), only the Hebrew biblical names of the Mediterranean, along with biblical quotes that reiterate the divine promise:

"The Mediterranean sea is already mentioned in the bible. Is it also called the Mediterranean in the book of books? Exodus 23/31: And I will set thy bounds from the sea of Suf even to the sea of the Pelishtim, and from the desert to the river: Deuteronomy, 11/24: Every Place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours…. From the river, the river Prath to the uttermost sea shall be your border. Joshua, 1:4: From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great sea…towards the going down of the sun, shall be your border."

This intertextuality gives a holy stamp to the textbook and its teaching and a scientific stamp to the Bible (Lemke 1998).

**Dissimulation**: presenting events from a single point of view, i.e. the Arabs are a hostile "problematic" element. Palestinian point of view or narratives regarding the land or any historical events which involves them (such as massacres and expulsions) are never mentioned.

**Fragmentation**: separating people from places, namely describing the land while ignoring or concealing the existence of its indigenous population. This is done by changing the names of places or by depicting Palestinian areas as colourless spots defined as "Areas without data". (Plate no.4). As Henrikson maintains, the renamed locations of conquered people or minority groups - create "toponymic silences, […] "blank spaces, silences of uniformity, of standardization or deliberate exclusion, wilful ignorance or even actual repression" (Henrikson, 1994:59).

These "toponymic silences" reinforce the Zionist slogan "A land without people for a people without land", and justify the policy of occupation and colonization.

**Reification**, presenting events and facts as natural and outside temporal boundaries, i.e. the Arabs are part of the underdeveloped landscape (Bar-Gal1994:231) and their misfortunes are a natural "lot"(*The 20th Century*, p.195).
1.4. The importance of this study

"Ideologies are representations which can be shown to contribute to social relations of power and domination" (Fairclough, 2003:9). These representations appear in textbooks.

As Hicks notes (1980), even students who may never read a book for pleasure or for general instruction, must read their textbooks in order to pass their matriculation exams. Most Israeli students, being deprived of any meaningful contact with their Palestinian neighbours, are drafted immediately after graduating from high school, and are sent to carry on the Israeli policy in the Palestinian occupied territories. For that reason, a critical reading of their textbooks may have a crucial importance for them and their teachers, who usually do not look for subtexts, because they do not think subtexts exist (Weinburg 2001: 77), especially in heavily ideological spheres such as the Israeli society. Students normally ‘overlook or not know how to seek the features that are designed to shape their perceptions or make them view events in a particular way’. They do not interrogate the text, but accept its overt narrative as the ultimate or even 'divine' truth (Wineburg 2001:77-78).

Wineburg’s study (2001:76) shows that ‘for students, reading history was not a process of puzzling about author's intentions or situating texts in a social world but of gathering information’.

Although, as Jenkins maintains, history ‘is never said or read innocently for it is always for someone’ (Jenkins 1991:86), teachers and students don't know that 'facts never speak for themselves' and don’t suspect that 'History does not correspond to the reality of things in the past' (Jenkins 1991:xiii). They are not aware of what Barthes called 'The effect of the real'(1967) or the bias created by writers' concepts and understandings.

These observations about history textbooks are all the more true about geography textbooks, for students expect scientific discourse and visuals to be neutral, and would never suspect what Bar-Gal maintains:

"The educational system […] less often emphasizes that the map [of Israel] is a distorted model, which sometimes can "lie," and contain items that are completely different from reality"(1996:69).
In order to know how to read school texts and be empowered by this knowledge, students and teachers need explicit instruction of the ways in which these texts convey their messages; otherwise they are left outside the ideological controversies that engender the texts. Not providing such instruction seems as 'wilfully obliterating the communicative needs of their addressees' (Kress 1993:184). The present study tries to offer an introduction to such an instruction which seems essential in multicultural countries such as Israel where the critical reading of the official narrative is still considered unpatriotic (Firer 2004).

Last introductory remarks: since Hebrew is read from right to left, the multimodal analysis will refer to the right side of the page as the "given" and to the left side as "new". Most titles will appear in abbreviated form, i.e. The Geography of the Land of Israel =GLI.

All emphases are mine unless indicated otherwise.

2. Ideological Layout

The following layout analysis (E. Bar Navi 1998: The 20th century: History of the people of Israel for grades 11-12 (1998):Pp.78-79) is an example of legitimization (plate no.1). It explores the characteristics of the New Jew, or the returning Hebrew who came, towards the end of the 19th century, to inherit the land and master it, and promotes the ideal of an Arab-free land.

This double spread presents important aspects of the Zionist perception regarding both Palestinian Arabs and Palestinian Jews in the early years of the 20th century, a perception that is still relevant and inculcated through the political discourse, the free media and Education. It is a part of chapter 12 (p.78): The triangle of the land of Israel which states it "examines the roots of the national struggle for the domination of Israel and the relationships between the tips of the Israeli triangle: Jews, Arabs, British." Naming the whole area 'Israel' when in fact it was called Palestine, enhances the conviction that it had always been "ours" while distorting historical truth⁸.

'The Land of Israel types' are exclusively Jewish namely, new-comers, although the term 'types' usually refers to the indigenous population of a region.

⁸The Land of Israel was the Zionist name for pre-state Israel during the British rule, when the country was officially called Palestine.
The caption "Land of Israel types" is at the right margin of the page, the very real and given (Kress and Van-Leeuwen 1996). On the left side of the caption, as its "new", but as the ideal-given of the whole double spread, we see Jewish "land labourers"; On the facing page [p.79], in the new-real spot of the double spread, namely at the bottom center, there is a photograph of a Jewish patrol guard from the group of Hashomer, which was founded in 1907 as the first Jewish armed force to defend Jewish settlements against robbers and invaders.

The caption Land of Israel Types refers to both poles: the given ideal land labourers who look anticipatively towards the future (p.78) and the real-new Jewish guard (p.79), who looks proudly from the top of his Arab horse, to the right bottom of the double-spread, which usually represents the past. These two photographs represent the two most prominent components of the image of the new Zionist Jew, the farmer-soldier. They are strongly connected by a diagonal vector and form one whole complex sign (Kress 1993) which is the most salient part of the cross-shaped
composition of the double spread, and therefore constitutes its main message: the conquering (which is termed "redemption") of the ancient homeland by its returning sons.

The "Land-of Israel types" have already shed their Diaspora Jews looks, despised by the fist Zionists and they already resemble the indigenous Palestinians, especially the real-new sun-tanned muscular horseman, wearing an Arab Kafieh on his head, mastering an Arab horse and turning a proud face towards the despised past, a spot which is occupied by a strongly framed green window with a white title on a red background: "Source: Yitzhak Epstein: A missing question (Hashiloah magazine, 1907)". As Arnheim emphasises (1988: 55) 'the frame defines the picture as [...] a centre that exerts its dynamic effects upon its surroundings'.

The Window is placed under the photograph of the forward-looking land labourers, at the real-given spot and with a straight horizontal vector to the proud horseman, who is gazing condescendingly at it from the height of his Arab horse.

In his article "Epstein claimed very harshly and categorically that [the Zionists] must not disregard the Arab inhabitants of the Land of Israel, since it would harm Zionism both politically and morally." (p.77).

The Window is a fragmented quote form Epstein's article:

"[...] there is in our beloved land an entire nation, which has occupied it for hundreds of years and has never thought to leave it [...] while we feel a deep love for the land of our forefathers, we forgot that [...] The Arab, like every man, is tied to his native land with strong bonds."

Epstein characterises the Palestinians as:

"The people who inhabit the land, its true labourers and masters [...] a nation that has no need for a resurrection movement for it has never been dead and has never ceased to live for a moment"

This window is connected by a diagonal vector – which suggests causal links (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996:58) - to another window on page 79, which, as students claim, is the least salient before the editorial text: a cream-coloured tiny "Eshnav", (a small peeping-window), placed at the ideal- new place on a cream background. The Window is titled: "Demography of the land of Israel from 1880-1931". The Window is divided into three columns: Year - Arabs - Jews. The figures show that both populations were increasing at that period although the Jewish population increased far more than the Arab one. The position of the window at the ideal-new place may be
explained by the caption located in the extreme left margin, that is to say, as the ultimate ideal new:

"The demography of the Land of Israel was changing constantly in favour of the Jews. First moderately, and as the conflict has deepened between the two nations the process was accelerated by the immigration of Arabs and the ascendance of Jews. **The dramatic turning point** will be during the war of independence in 1948 when the **collapse of the Arab community will empty the country of most of its Arab inhabitants.**"

Coffin (1997) maintains that in History schoolbooks events are appraised according to the change they bring about. Here, "**Dramatic turning point**" is a positive appraisal, and "emptying the country of its Arabs" is equally positive. As the book specifies in a later chapter (*The 20th Century* p.184-195), the 'emptying' and 'collapse' were caused by the Palestinians' 'panicked flight' following the massacre in the "friendly village" Dir Yassin and other massacres like it. The text specifies that the massacre "**did not inaugurate the 'massive escape' of the Arabs...but accelerated it greatly**". Both 'inaugurate' and 'accelerated it greatly' are positive if not festive terms.

The book goes on to emphasize that this 'flight' was considered, even by "**moderate**" Zionist leaders such as the first president Haim Weizman, as a "**miracle**", for it solved "**an awesome demographic problem**", which could have been an impediment in the way of "**the realization of the dream the Zionist movement fought to realize for more than half a century: the declaration of the state of the Jews**".

Given the directionality of Hebrew reading the relationships between the two Windows may be that of a question (at the bottom of the right page) and answer (at the top of the left page).

The insertion of events-to-come (the "emptying" occurred in 1948), which is typical of fictional writing ⁹ and which is used by historians as a part of their rhetoric of persuasion (Barthes, 1967; White, 1987), provides the [ideal] answer to Epstein's [real] question: the welfare of the indigenous population was indeed absent from the dominant Zionist discourse because it was soon to become irrelevant – most of the people whom Epstein called "[the land's] true labourers and masters"– would disappear as soon as the new "Land-of-Israel types" inherited the land and became its true labourers, defenders and masters in their turn.

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⁹ Genette termed this technique Prolepsis, meaning: inserting an event posterior to the events that are reported. *Figures III*, 1972
The double spread ends with a rhetorical question: "Was it possible then to turn the situation upside down and make a pact between Jewish and Arab nationalism?" The answer this layout offers is apparently, No. This has been and still is the official Zionist and Israeli message. As the historian Benny Morris (Righteous Victims, p. 252-258) writes "The tone was set by [the first prime minister] Ben-Gurion himself in June 1938, when he said: 'I support compulsory transfer [of Palestinian population]. I do not see in it anything immoral'.

The Palestinians as a demographic threat is constantly discussed in the Israeli media and warned against by politicians to this day\textsuperscript{10}. It is also explicit in Geography schoolbooks such as GLI (P.240), which explains the need to Jewify the Galilee as a national goal:

"[…] to preserve the national land and keep it from illegal invasion of non-Jewish population, to purchase land for development in order to prevent a territorial sequence of non-Jewish settlements, out of fear that an Arab sequence would cause the separation of the Galilee from the state of Israel."

3. Visual Exclusion in Geography schoolbooks

"Cartography like politics is a 'teleological discourse', reifying power, reinforcing the status quo, and freezing social interaction within charted lines." (Henrikson, 1994:60).

Israeli Curriculum planners have never resigned to man-made borders that seem to them an "accidental consequence of cease fire commands which paralyzed military momentum", nor have they given up teaching about the Eretz Israel or the Land of Israel which is "a whole Geographic entity" (Bar-Gal 1993a:125) and includes Israel, Palestine and parts of Jordan and Syria. The schoolbooks studied here present not "the 'State of Israel' which has achieved international legitimation" but "the 'Land of Israel' which has divine legitimation" (Bar-Gal 1993b:430).

As plate no.2 ("Israel following the Oslo Agreements") demonstrates very vividly, with the two soldiers bursting out of the map toward Syria and Lebanon, international laws and decisions are presented as inapplicable. The white rectangles on the map assure the students that Samaria and Judea (The West Bank) are "in a process of

\textsuperscript{10} Ministers keep calling them 'the enemy from within' and 'a demographic threat' (For instance Netanyahu, among others, on the 17.12.2003 in a conference in the interdisciplinary centre in Hertzelia).
dynamic changes" (right rectangle) but "Gaza strip will remain under Israeli control" (left rectangle). The soldiers are probably meant to reassure them that we have not resigned and will not abide by man-made decisions and borders in the north part of the country either.

3.2. Dissimulation. Fragmentation and geographic silences

Visuals such as maps and graphs can naturalize the effacement of international borders and the exclusion of Palestinians from the Land better than any other genre. Palestinian territories are always presented as part of the state of Israel, but they are usually depicted without their Palestinians inhabitants. The parts that are controlled by the Palestinian Authorities are delimited with broken lines which signify temporariness and are not differentiated in colour from the other parts of Israel. Following some examples from the Geography book *Israel- the man and the space* (plates no.2, 4) and from *The Geography of the Land of Israel* (plate no. 3)
Plate no. 2: Israel and its neighbours 2002
Plate no. 3: Israel following the Oslo agreements. GLI p. 17
This political map of Israel (p.7) omits mixed Jewish-Arab cities such as Acre and Nazareth. Similarly, a map titled 'universities in Israel' (p.16) depicts Jewish universities in the Palestinian territories, but omits all Palestinian universities. A map of Jerusalem, "The historic capital of the Jewish people" (pp. 174-175) shows no Muslim mosques or public buildings in Jerusalem.

Another common way to obliterate Palestinian existence\(^{11}\) is to present Palestinian areas as "blind spots" or "toponymic silences". (Plate no. 4)

The "Geographic silences" to be sure, do not erase the people, but present them as absent or socially excluded their existence is nevertheless assumed (Barthes 1980:855), as in Lacan's example of the book which is absent from the shelf but its non-occupied slot proves its existence as a missing book.

This exclusion is also expressed in the editorial text (IMS, p.32):

Some of the foreign workers are Palestinians…. They are employed in unprofessional jobs and their wages are lower than that of the Israeli citizens who work in the same jobs…. This is characteristic of all developed countries.\(^{12}\)

This is an example of fragmentation: The Palestinian territories are represented as part of Israel and yet the inhabitants of these same territories are either non-existence or presented as "foreign" workers. However, readers may not be aware of this peculiarity because the territories are not marked as Palestine.

\(^{12}\) This characterization of developed countries is regarded by researchers as "The other side of western modernity: colonialism, holocaust, slavery, imperialist domination and exploitation." (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001:17).
Plate no. 4: Israel-The Man and the Space: Distribution of Arab Population in Israel 2000 (white rectangle framed with a solid line: "Area without data"; White rectangle framed with a broken line: "Areas A controlled by the Palestinian Authorities").
3.3. Centre and peripheralness

The centre is not always identical with the focus of the map (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996:90). This shift is made possible by the use of colour, size and perspective. "One of the unfortunate consequences of colonialism and the condition it engendered, [...] is a feeling that the centre is elsewhere." (Henrikson 1994:55-56)

Arabs and Arab countries are marginalized in Israeli History schoolbooks. In *FCP*, (p.269) we learn that, "In the years 1881-1882 thousands of people arrived at Jaffa port: from Russia, from Rumania, from the Balkan and even from far-away Yemen." Needless to say, Yemen is the closest to Jaffa port, and the question is, why is it mentioned as the most "far away"? The only answer is that the implied centre of the "mental map" of the writers is still Eastern Europe, the spiritual centre of Zionism and the origin of the dominant social group in Israel. As Henrikson explains "mental maps are a critical variable – occasionally the decisive factor – in the making of public policy" (p. 50).

Arab areas within Israel are pushed to the margins of consciousness and social reality, as it is well expressed in the following statement from *GLI*: p.197

*"Factors that inhibit the development of the Arab village*

...Arab villages are far from the centre, the roads to them are difficult and they have remained out of the process of change and development, they are hardly exposed to modern life and there are difficulties to connect them to the electricity and water networks."

Most of these "distant" villages are not specified on any map though they are all within the "narrow waistline of Israel" which is equal in breadth to the distance between Manhattan and JFK airport, as emphasized in Israeli maps issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.  

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hills overlooking those villages, and Jewish colonies that are beyond the official borders of Israel, are presented as examples of high standard of living and not as marginal far-away deprived settlements. For instance the top site Rakefet:

"Many people aspire to live in a community settlement like Rakefet, because its inhabitants are privileged with high standard of living expressed in a rustic and serene atmosphere, clean air, houses that are land-ridden and a variety of community activities." (SIS, p.66).

As Henrikson writes, "The sensation of peripheralness itself cannot be altered, of course, by simply shifting or reducing the graphic frame of the map" (1994:56).

4. Racist Discourse

4.1. Genericization

Racist discourse always deals with dichotomies (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001:55-56). In accordance with state policies, all the representations studied here, verbal and visual, use an ethnic division of Israeli citizens into Jews and non-Jews. For instance in SIS p. 55 there is a map titled: Rural habitation in Israel: Blue: Jewish villages, red: non-Jewish villages.

The "non-Jews" are excluded from developmental graphs as in plate no. 5 from PIS (p. 76): The graph which depicts average marriage age for women as one of the criteria of development, manages to locate Israel as the last one in a line of "Developed Countries" thanks to a minuscule footnote: "The graph refers only to the Jewish population."

The non-Jews, regardless of their origin and religion, are sometimes called by the generic hyperonym: Arabs. For instance:

IMS, p. 12- "The Arab Population: Within this group there are several religious groups and several ethnic groups: Muslims, Christians, Druze, Bedouins and Circassians. But since most of them are Arab they shall be referred to henceforth as Arabs."

14 VL 2001 describes a similar attitude of the Americans treating all the "others" who were dominated by them as "blacks".
Naming a whole population by "a generic name in the plural without the article" (Van Leeuwen 1996:46) is an example of genericization. Defining people as non-entity is a perfect way to impersonalize them and as Van Dijk puts it:

"Dominance, differentiation, diffusion, diversion, Impersonalisation, destruction, and daily discrimination [...] serve in various ways to legitimate and enact the distinction of the "other" [...] by dominating the minority groups, by excluding them from social activities and even by destroying and murdering them"(Quoted in: RW 2001: 21).

4.2. The Palestinian Problem

Van-Leeuwen (1996:60) counts as one of the features of racist discourse, as a sub-category of 'abstraction', the reference to humans by an abstract noun that does not include the semantic feature + human, and represents "social actors by means of a quality assigned to them" for instance the quality of being "a problem".
The Palestinian refugees, who were driven out of Israel in 1948 and 1967, are usually called Arab refugees, to emphasize their being members of the big Arab Nation, which, according to the political Israeli discourse, is responsible for their relocation. (i.e. PIS p.153). For Israel they constitute a political "problem" that must be "solved". For instance, a chapter in The 20th Century (p.194) titled The Palestinians – from refugees to a nation', promises to

"Explore the Palestinian problem, which stands since the beginning of the Zionist enterprise in the heart of the Middle Eastern conflict, and the attitudes within the Israeli public regarding the problem and the character of its solution".

This problem has no human face in any of the schoolbooks. Sometimes it materializes in empty flooded streets (The 20th Century: 194; Modern Times II, p. 238), which gives it the appearance of an environmental or ecological problem (plate no.6)

Plate no. 6: Modern Times II: 239: 'The 'Palestinian problem' matured in the poverty, the inaction and the frustration that were the lot of the refugees in their pitiful camps.' Courtesy of the State of Israel government Press Office.
Another way of representing the 'Palestinian problem' appears in the Geography book *People In Space* (p. 153). Here one sees an aerial photograph of an empty refugee camp. Neither the title nor the caption, nor the editorial text specify who lives there and why. The empty refugee camp is titled "Jabalia – a refugee camp in Gaza strip", and the caption explains it is: One of the biggest refugee camps whose population is overcrowded and poverty-stricken", without specifying who this population is.

According to Van-Leeuwen, this angle is that of "The pilot who flies too high to be able to see the people on whom he is dropping his bombs… It is the angle of the 'objective knowledge' that causes detail (and people) to disappear – and it is the kind of knowledge which education is still primarily concerned to reproduce". (Van Leeuwen 1992:49). This representation emphasizes the fact that when dealing with the Palestinian refugees one does not deal with people but with a universal environmental or a political 'problem'.

This representation is quite different from the other reports included in the same chapter about refugees in other places (i.e. Jewish, Haitian, Rwandan), whose vicissitudes and the causes for their tragedy, are explained on maps and photographs depicting their routes of escape.

The only information the reader receives about the Palestinian "problem" is that of a sad "lot" and of unfavourable circumstances that are presented in one of the following fashions (Van Leeuwen 1996:97):

1. In terms of 'existentialization – where action is represented as something that 'simply exists':

   The *population* in the refugee camps is growing fast and the conditions of life are very hard – the rate of *unemployment is high*, the houses are crowded and poor and the standard of health services, education and *hygiene is low*. (*PIS*: 110)

2. In terms of 'naturalization' where actions are represented as natural processes by means of abstract material processes:

   "The 'Palestinian problem' matured in the poverty, the inaction and the frustration that were the lot of the refugees in their pitiful camps." (*The 20th Century*, p. 194)

3. Metaphorically, as a self-directed phenomenon, that acts independently of human social actors:
"Although Israel came victorious out of the survival-war that was forced upon her, the Palestinian problem would poison for more than a generation the relationships of Israel with the Arab world and with the international community." (Modern Times II: 239).

In The 20th Century (p.249), a textbook for 11th-12th grades, the author, who also co-wrote Modern Times II, and is presented on the back-cover as a renowned historian, explains that annexing the west bank would turn Israel into "a bi-national state with an Arab majority – an absurd situation where the Jewish people would become a minority in their own land and the Zionist dream [would turn] into a south-African nightmare". This book, praised in other studies for being progressive and politically correct (Podeh, 2002, Firer 2004), teaches the students that South Africa today is a nightmare for the white population with whom he equates the Israelis.

Neither the problems not the nightmares of the Palestinian refugees themselves are ever mentioned.

5. Classification images and the Meta - narrative of 'Development'

Not only the Palestinian refugees are a "problem". "Israel's Arabs" as the Palestinian citizens of Israel are called officially, are presented as a demographic "threat" and as a developmental task.

The meta-narrative of development in Israeli schoolbooks is what Page defines as "colonialist and Orientalist" (2003:99). Israel's Arabs are conceived as a non-Westernized society, underdeveloped as the landscape. (Bar-Gal, 1994).

As Hodge and Kress (1993:63) state, classification is "an instrument of control [...] over the flux of experience of physical and social reality [...] and society's control over conceptions of this reality".

"Classification images"(VL1992:54) are used to convey development and under-development. They usually represent "meta-narratives" about development and under-development.

Current Geographical studies argue that,

"Meta- narratives, such as 'development', are to be mistrusted (Page, 2003:92), [and] 'Development' should be questioned. The world with its varieties cannot be understood using only a small number of concepts, the people who get to choose
which concepts tend to come from wealthy areas and they describe the world according to their own vision of how it should be and call these concepts universal". (ibid. 98).

Page maintains that "If development is to be regulated it needs to be scrutinized," and suggests "Analyzing discursive tactics employed by the advocates of development…" stating that, "Current geographical work sets out to disturb the simplicity of development propaganda in order to deepen our understanding of different places…. Development Geography [has] dispensed with the view that anything can be justified as long as it is labelled "progressive" (p. 101).

But Israeli textbooks of Geography haven’t. Israeli schoolbooks never present "Israel's Arabs" as individual modern people. The Arab way of life is presented as clannish and "traditional" which means backward. When the Arabs progress they become 'westernized' for they imitate Western (or Israeli) way of life, whether in construction or in agriculture, this sort of presentation is compatible with the type of colonialist "Writing about the developing world [where] peoples' and places' histories are ignored." (Page 2003:99). Thus, tradition is made to seem devoid of reason or order and stands for nothing more than Primitiveness.

5.1. Racist icons
The 'non-Jewish' figure of the farmer is the iconic "Oxfam Image" (Hicks 1980) of the third world: It hasn't any ethnic object-signs (Barthes 1977:24), such as a kafieh or an "Arab" dress, but a kaki shirt and oversized khaki trousers, which are the usual hand-down to the poor neighbours. Poverty, backwardness and dependence upon Jewish good-will have become the "secondary cultural characteristics" (Cazden 2001) of the 'non-Jewish' population and stand for "Arabness" or "non-Jewishness". This typification as Van-Leeuwen (2000:97) explains, "serves to legitimize the status quo and the interests of those in power."

The farmer goes from left to right, receding, according to Hebrew directionality, away from the "modern" machine-made human-less field, which is located at the new ideal part (top left), above a caption: "Modern agriculture in Taybeh, village in the coastal plane".
Another racist icon used to represent Palestinians is a caricaturistic drawing of stereotypical "Arab" with a moustache, wearing kaffiya and followed by a camel (plate no. 7). Both representations are considered by Van-Leeuwen to be racist icons.

*GLI*: 303- "**Management of land use in the Arab sector**: The Arabs refuse to live in high buildings and insist on living in one-storey houses with land".

Accompanying this statement is a cartoon-like icon of a big foregrounded "Arab" with his camel, standing outside a round-framed multi storied building which seems receding backwards into the horizon.

Plate no. 7: The Arabs refuse to become modern and live in multi-storied houses

Arnheim (1988:52-55) explains that the round frame forms an enclosure,
"A closed system which taken as a whole behaves as a centre of energy [and]fences off [its image]from the environment[...]Its function as an enclosure is most uncompromisingly expressed when its shape is circular." (p.62).

The 'Arab' then, is separated from the modern house in an irreversible way. In this book, the racist icon of the Arab appears whenever Arabs are mentioned. As for the motivation of cartoon-like representation Van-Leeuwen (1992:56) explains:

"Cartoons are general without being abstract. Represent people as types rather than as tokens. All Turks have moustaches and Arabs camels. This reality is replacing the reality of naturalism and individualism."

This representation is compatible with the verbal texts of the books, for instance:
"The Arab society is traditional and objects to changes by its nature, reluctant to adopt novelties […] Modernization seems dangerous to them […] they are unwilling to give anything up for the general good." (GLI p.303)

5.2. Different semantics, Impersonalisation and functionalization

In Israeli textbooks different standards are applied to Jewish and Arab life: In a series of case studies of different forms of rural settlements (3 Jewish and 1 Arab, SIS pp. 59-61) the Jewish settlements are classified both by their religious tendencies, as "religious" versus "secular" and according to their specific way of life (village, moshav, kibbutz etc.). But the village Yama is defined ethnically as "an Israeli-Arab village"; not as a sample of the villages of its kind, but of all Arab villages in Israel. The title of Yama's case study is "From Tradition to Modernity", a dichotomy which is not applied to the Jewish religious village Bnei-Reem, which is praised for combining modern technology with Jewish tradition. This combination was possible in the beginning thanks to "an Arab family who dwelled in the area. This family served as "Sabbath Goy" and would open and close the watering system [on the Sabbath]. Today, modern technology enables them to do it without human touch, with the help of a Sabbath clock which operates the machines" (p.63).

The report about the "Arab family who dwelled in the area" is an example of Impersonalisation and functionalization which are typical of racist discourse (Van Leeuwen 1996:59). The family has no identity apart from their function as "Sabbath Goy". Since the book does not mention that the village Bnei Reem was built on the ruins of the Palestinian village al-Masmiyya al-Kabira, whose inhabitants were driven out in 1948, we don’t know why this one family remained after the others were gone or where exactly did they "dwell".

Van Leeuwen mentions (1996:53) that "in stories…nameless characters fulfil only passing, functional roles, and do not become points of identification for the reader or listener. In press "stories" something similar occurs".

By 'functionalising' these people, namely by treating them as if they were a gadget, the book teaches the students that not everyone deserves to have a History or a human

15 There are at least 7 different sorts of Arab villages in Israel (Grossman and Katz 1993), each of them justified by topographic conditions, type of land and crops.
identity. Some people only have functions in other people's story, such as "Sabbath Goy", and when they are replaced by machines they become non-existent. Had the text mentioned any details about the family it should have also mentioned that the "terrorist infiltrators" who "harassed" the village, frightened the cows, and discouraged the people to the point of leaving (p. 64), were no more than its original inhabitants who came in times of crop for their fruits and for revenge, as specified in the History schoolbook *The 20h Century* (p. 219).

Linguistically, Jewish settlements' "reforms" and "innovations", "development" and "cultivation", are presented in active verbs, which emphasize the active part of the inhabitants in these processes (*SIS* p.60, 62). But the processes of Yama's changes are packed in humanless Grammatical metaphors or nominal clauses which emphasize the passivity of the villagers and conceal Israeli responsibility and present human strife as self-generating processes: "*Their lands are diminishing*" (p. 58), "*infrastructures slowly improve*", "*In Yama, like in other [Arab] rural settlements, there are only few services...*" (p.56).

Case studies of Jewish settlements offer rich descriptions of their lives, blue-prints of the village structure, quotes and testimonies from "the mouth of pioneers" and current inhabitants. Yama case-study neither shows any human face nor quotes any human speech, except for an indirect semi-quote from the "elders" who thank Israel for the "Modern revolution" it brought to their lives, and promise, as a token of their gratitude to be "a bridge for peace"(p.59).

As we have seen earlier, in Jewish settlements such as Rakefet, land ridden houses are a sign of 'quality life' but in Arab villages land-ridden houses are a proof of conservativism and of the unwillingness of the inhabitants to become "modern" and more urban.

Although Israeli researchers of textbooks such as Bar Gal (1993) who studied Geography schoolbooks, E. Podeh (2002) and R. Firer (1985, 2004) who studied History schoolbooks, insist that these books' attitude towards Palestinians is "ethnocentric" and thus differentiated from racism, researchers of racist discourse would not see the difference and for them "*Ideological articulations such as racism, nationalism, sexism, ethnicism, verge on one another, are connected and overlap.*" (Reisigl and Wodak 2001:21)
6. Summary

The paper dealt with one aspect of Israeli territorial and national identity promoted in ten History and Geography schoolbooks - the denial of Palestinian identity, which is achieved in a multi modal fashion. The Palestinians citizens of the state of Israel are always depicted dichotomously as "Israel' Arabs" vs. the Israelis, or as the "Non-Jewish population" vs. the Jewish one. They are presented stereotypically, in racist vocabulary and racist visuals, as a group which is a threat, a problem to be solved or a developmental burden. The Palestinian occupied territories are depicted as part of the state of Israel but their Palestinian inhabitants are defined as a problem to be solved and are missing from maps, photographs and graphs, which thereby legitimate the conquest and the occupation of these lands, and profess the inapplicability of international laws and decisions. Palestinian "inferiority" is depicted as a natural permanent condition, and their discrimination is represented as their "lot". Their misfortunes are either a "tragedy" ("Modern Times II: 245, Firer 2004) namely an act of fate or a result of their own actions. The books suggest, albeit implicitly, the ideal of an Arab-free land as the best solution for the existence of the Jewish state. Besides serving as a tool to instil discriminatory ideas and racist beliefs these representations enhance ignorance, both of the real geopolitical situation and of Geographic discourse. Assuming that primary and even high school students do not turn to libraries to verify the facts in their schoolbooks, and that most teachers were educated by similar books, one must conclude that the last two generations of Israelis are not aware of the geopolitical reality of their country. Furthermore, today's politicians are yesterday's school-children and today's children are the future politicians. Israeli schoolbooks educate students to hostility and contempt towards their immediate neighbours and environment, and do not prepare them for a peaceful co-existence with their Palestinian co-citizens. They teach that Democracy may segregate citizens according to ethnicity and that human suffering and empathy are race or religion-dependent. These schoolbooks inculcate Jewish superiority and heterophobia and seek to conceal if not erase Palestinian identity and culture.

7. Conclusion:

16 For instance *PIS* explains that the Palestinian refugees have remained in the refugee camps because of their unwillingness to integrate in Arab countries. (p.110)
My argument is that the schoolbooks studied here are a manifestation of what Reisigl and Wodak (2001:24) term "elite racism": racism reproduced in papers, schoolbooks, academic discourse, political speeches and parliamentary debates – the racism which is then implemented and enacted in other social fields, such as the army.

The paper presented Israeli schoolbooks and Israeli education but this is not an Israeli problem. As other studies prove (Coffin 1997, Van-Leeuwen and Selander 1995) the exclusion of "others" through racist discourse and the construal of national identity against other identities are common in many Western countries, especially those which absorb immigrants.

Schoolbooks are not overtly ideological. They have the authority of unbiased truth (Olson 1989, Wineburg, 2001) and are presented as objective neutral reports of 'the bare facts' and scientific data. However, schoolbooks have been proven to be ideological\(^\text{17}\), and to obey rules of recontextualization which are dictated by dominant ideologies and the truth of Power. In schoolbooks, as in any other history book, 'the choices of plot structure and the choice of paradigms of explanations' are 'products of […] an interpretive decision: a moral or ideological decision' (White, 1978:67).

The interest of the writers and authorizers of schoolbooks, as of historians or educators in general, is to control discourse, to present history and Geography as they want it to be (Jenkins 1991:85). As Coffin (1997) argues, students learn from their history schoolbooks not only the discourse of the discipline but also the discourse of politicians, lawyers and other manipulators of discourses. They learn to present interpretations as facts, to insert personal views into a seemingly neutral presentation, in short they learn the language of power.

Schoolbooks that construe a territorial and national Identity, which is largely based on the denial of other identities and on the concealment of what Habermas calls the "lifeworld" of other people, namely of all the informal domains of their social and cultural life, do it by distorting geopolitical and social facts and by effacing all other meaningful life. Such an education promotes hostility and racism.

Coffin (1997) maintains that 'Success in school history is dependent on a student's control of the lexicogrammatical resources and text structures that realize the arguing genres', and this paper argues that if teachers and students want to know how

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to seek the features that are designed to shape their identities, their perceptions, or make them view events in a particular way, they should learn how to interrogate their school texts, and that depends also on their control of multimodal resources and structures.

As Jenkins (1991p.85 -86) argues, History, and one may add Geography and all school 'subjects' are 'fields of force', namely

A field that variously includes and excludes, centres and marginalizes views […] in ways and in degrees that react to powers of those forwarding them.'

And as Jenkins concludes, 'knowing this might empower the knower'.

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**A. the cited schoolbooks:**


**General bibliography**


