Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

2009

The Role of Zionism in Diasporic Jewish Education: On Education, Language and Community

Stephen Sheps
University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd

The Role of Zionism in Diasporic Jewish Education:
On Education, Language and Community

By

Stephen W. Sheps

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Through Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

The Role of Zionism in Diasporic Jewish Education:
On Education, Language, and Community

by

Stephen Sheps

APPROVED BY:

_____
Dr. A.S. Sidahmed
Political Science

_____
Dr. Muhammad Shuraydi
Sociology Anthropology and Criminology

_____
Dr. Karen Engle, Advisor
Sociology Anthropology and Criminology

_____
Dr. John E. Deukmedjian, Chair of Defense
Sociology Anthropology and Criminology

September 11th, 2009

Author's Declaration of Originality

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights and that any ideas, techniques, quotations, or any other material from the work of other people included in my thesis, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices. Furthermore, to the extent that I have included copyrighted material that surpasses the bounds of fair dealing within the meaning of the Canada Copyright Act, I certify that I have obtained a written permission from the copyright owner(s) to include such material(s) in my thesis and have included copies of such copyright clearances to my appendix.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my thesis committee and the Graduate Studies office, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

<u>Abstract</u>

Zionism has become more than just a social movement; it has become a politicized ideological construct, an institution, an extension of Israeli politics and is commonly viewed as the unifying facet of what it means to be Jewish in the North American Diaspora. Within the Diaspora, there is an element of Zionism contained in Jewish educational resources that cannot go unnoticed. It is my belief that the methods of education used within these Diasporic communities impacts the way that Jews perceive themselves, each other and their relationship to the conflict in Israel/Palestine, reinforcing Zionist ideologies, beliefs, and a sense that unwavering loyalty and support for the homeland is something worth defending at all costs. Reevaluating the significance of educational materials and images found within them, the ideological nature of language and discourses of power will potentially create a dialogue into the conflict, self-reflexive understanding, and perhaps hope for peace.

Dedication:

To my Grandparents, Jack and Lil Soroka, without whom I could not have accomplished this project.

Acknowledgments:

First and foremost I must recognize the efforts of my committee, Dr. A.S. Sidahmed, Dr. Muhammad Shuraydi and my supervisor, Dr. Karen Engle for their support of the project and their belief in me, as well as their collective patience with me as I worked through very difficult materials.

I must also acknowledge my Editor, Peter Wilson, as you helped me in ways you'll probably never know over the course of the last four years, from the gestation of the project to this final result. You were my sounding board throughout the entire process.

Thanks as well to Shoshana Kirmeyer at the Calgary Jewish Academy as well as Ms. Jacobson at the Edmonton Talmud Torah for granting me access to materials and resources.

Finally I must acknowledge and thank my family for all you have done, especially my uncle, Howard Starkman, and my mother, Roni Sheps.

Table of Contents

<u>**Introduction**</u>

I am a Jew. What that means to me may not necessarily mean the same thing as it would to anyone else. I, like the vast majority of people in my socio-cultural and religious group, have grown up in the Diaspora, away from my supposed homeland and away from many of the symbols, spaces and places that make up the physical expression of a collective identity and history. But is it my history? As I stated, I am a Jew, but I have many other labels. I am male, I am white, I am short and slightly over weight. I am a brother, a son, a musician, a writer, and a social theorist in training. The list goes on, with labels that can be added or taken away at will, depending on the day, my mood, and the all important missing link-the perceptions of another. An Other. Any Other. Anyone that knows me well enough knows that I am Jewish. I speak about it constantly, usually in a very self-deprecating and sometimes tasteless fashion, but it is usually the first thing that others will identify me as. People often tell me how happy they are to have a Jew-friend in their circle, but what does that mean? I am proud of my heritage, proud of my history, certainly proud to be a part of a group with such a unique and wonderful set of traditions. Yet this very notion of pride is a problematic one, the sort of problem that could link me to the very ideas that I am choosing to criticize. I invoke the idea of pride not in a nationalist context, but rather for the essence of what I believe my religion stands for, and how I perceive myself as a Jew. But to anyone outside, could they understand what it means to me to be Jewish? Probably not.

I grew up in what is known as the Diaspora, in a small Jewish community in Edmonton, a city in Western Canada. I went to a Jewish day school, a Jewish summer

camp, and an Orthodox synagogue. I had exclusively Jewish friends until I was 13

years old, oddly enough the same year I became a man according to our traditions.

My non-Jewish friends came to the event, my Bar Mitzvah, but really had very little

understanding of the significance of the event especially considering the entire

ceremony was in Hebrew. I could speak and read in Hebrew quite well at the time,

thanks to my Jewish education. I was fluent in both biblical and modern Hebrew,

and because I had Jewish friends, it was nice to be able to slip into it once in a while

if I did not want to be understood by those around me. Also, it was a lot of fun to

curse in what was perceived as a strange foreign language by my non-Jewish

friends.

Notice the separation. I have done this intentionally to force the issue of

difference immediately. I was socialized in a different way, forced to separate my

Jewish-ness from all other aspects of my life. I did not just have friends-it was Jewish

and non. I did not just speak English like nearly everyone else, I had different

holidays: No Christmas, New Years in September, and eight days every spring when

I was unable to eat bread. I was not the only Jewish student in my schools; there

were quite a few of us. My graduating class from my Hebrew school was 43. We

divided up into three groups for middle school and most of us reunited for high

school, but throughout our separation we were never far apart. We traveled in

packs, adopting "honorary Jews" into our inner circle and running with the "in

crowds" everywhere we went. We had the privilege of being white, relatively middle

class people who did not look any different than anyone else; we were not targets

for any kind of prejudice because we blended in so well, adapting to our

surroundings in the big world outside of our community. But we stuck together.

There was an unconscious sense of strength in numbers, strength in our perceived

unity despite our very different personalities. This acknowledgement of our

difference is crucial to understanding the identity of a Diasporic culture. Stuart Hall

suggests, "Without this relation of difference, no representation could occur. But

what is then constituted within representation is always open to being deferred,

staggered, serialized" (Hall, 26). The Afro-Caribbean Diaspora influenced Hall's

insights, but his ideas are more than applicable to the Jewish context.

There has been a constant gaze upon the Jewish people, a perpetual and

internal self-awareness of being the outsiders wherever they resided, that this

difference seen in others most certainly flows both ways, invoking a sense of social

distance similar to what Georg Simmel (1957) describes in *The Stranger.* Sometimes

this being the other has lead to great success and strength, whereas other times this

being on the outside, the object and subject of difference leads to terrible

consequences. In the context of the African Diaspora, Hall alludes to slavery; for the

Jewish people, the most recent and horrific event was the "Shoah" or Holocaust. My

parents and teachers taught this concept early on, this realization of being merely

two or three generations removed from the greatest tragedy our Diaspora dwelling

people had ever known, the top of a long list of tragedies that uniquely defines us,

the Jewish People, as who and what we are. Even now, as I invoke the use of the

word we, however, I have a difficult time truly placing my own I as a part of this we.

I refer to we and us as a member of the Jewish faith, but the Jewish people as a

community are historically very fractured and divided, aside from the idea of Israel,

and even that notion had historically been left open to constant debate and interpretation.

Ironically, this tragedy is often attributed to being the catalyst for prompting one of the greatest so-called victories our people had ever known, the creation of a homeland for the Jewish people nearly two thousand years after our exile. The Holocaust prompted a legitimate concern from the Western world to find a safe space for the Jewish people, and after more than three decades of discussion[1], Israel was born. Thus, a stateless Diaspora community had a state; it was up to the people to decide whether to return "home" or remain at home abroad.

As a Jew, I was taught to believe an idea without question, the idea of Zionism, that Israel was my second home and that I could always go there without any strings attached (aside from mandatory military service). This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is not entirely a positive force either. It really depends on how Zionism, the belief that Israel is the Jewish State, is interpreted by the individual person, Jewish or not. Zionism has become more than just an idea and social movement, it has become a type of politicized ideological construction, an institution, an extension of Israeli politics and is viewed as the unifying facet of what it means to be Jewish in the Diaspora, especially in North America. This distinction between the perceived idea and the political movement relates to Barthes' (1964, 1967) notion that the function of ideology is to make culture appear as natural,

---

[1] The first of such discussions was the signing into law of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, a British initiative written with the intent of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It was essentially the first formal document from a leading colonial power expressing the need for a Jewish national homeland.

creating a situation where the belief in Zionism has become embedded into the

socio-cultural milieu of modern Judaism. There appears to be an overwhelming

sense that to be a good Jew, you have to support Israel in everything that it does. I

am not sure that I can do that, even though I am very proud of my heritage and my

culture. The problem lies in the fact that an entire community of people lived in

Israel before it was given back[2] to the Jews at the expense of this other group, who

had occupied this territory for approximately 2000 years.

Yet in the Diaspora, the way each successive generation is educated has

within it an element of Zionism that cannot go unnoticed. It is my hope to explore

the role of Zionism within Jewish Diasporic education and to shed light on its

function inside of the texts used in the classroom. Education is a very powerful tool,

and is very much a reflection of the power structures that exist in the places

education comes from (Foucault, 1972, 1975, 1994b). In this case, this comes from

both the involvement of the Albertan and Canadian governments and the influence

of Israeli politics and culture in the classroom. According to Foucault, education is a

state-moderated, often militaristic apparatus; a tightly controlled institutionalized

system (1975, 138); yet in terms of Diasporic education, there is an external

influence beyond the curricula developed by civic, provincial and state level school

boards. How much of an impact is yet to be determined, but I am convinced that it is

there, and it exists in the form of Zionist-based discourses found throughout

classrooms in the Diaspora. This element of Zionism, and its development as an

---

[2] The idea of "giving Israel back" is more a reference to the emotional connection of the Jewish people to their biblical lands, but the shift in control is very much a new thing, more a "giving to" as opposed to a "giving back."

ideological tool creates, maintains and enforces something of a Diasporist collective identity, subjugated by and bound to the idea of Zionism and Judaism as one. Specifically, I will be exploring the Jewish communities living in Alberta and focusing on their education practices and materials.

The reawakening of the questions surrounding my identity occurred while I was working with children at the Edmonton Jewish Community Center. I was supervising a birthday party for the daughter of a Hassidic Rabbi. His nine-year-old son began to throw toys at the other children, shouting that he wished to be throwing rocks at Arab children rather than toys at his friends. This is when it occurred to me that there must be a fundamental flaw in the education system. This child had gone to school in Chicago, Israel, and Edmonton. His perceptions of what it meant to be Jewish had already begun to embody characteristics of someone who had lived through years of violence and struggle in the controversial settlements along the borders of the homeland, not a small boy living in the Diaspora. My desire to study the issue of education in relation to identity construction is manifested in the story of this boy.

This incident caused me to question many things about my own people and the Zionist perspective. First and foremost is the question of how a nine-year-old boy learned to behave in such a way, especially given that he is the son of a spiritual leader? Were these actions the product of learned behaviors and attitudes from his time living in Israel, or was it just random chance? Secondly, the behavior itself is diametrically opposed to the Jewish tradition of "Tikkun Olam." This concept is the idea that it is the Jews' responsibility, handed down from God, to perfect and heal

the world. This very notion brings up a narrative of intellectual and moral imperialism, not necessarily through conquest, but in terms of the power imbalance that one could perceive out of having a global responsibility. In a modern Jewish context, Tikkun Olam represents an abstract form of social justice and is a pillar of Jewish thought, both religiously and within the secular Jewish community, one that focuses primarily on the necessity for avoiding social chaos (Sacks, 1997; Lerner, 2006/2009)

Yet teaching children to hate does not appear to be justifiable in this context, socially, morally or religiously. It certainly does not lead to the promotion of peace and coexistence, in the homeland or Diasporic host countries. I am not going to suggest the radical argument that the educational practices in Edmonton and Calgary by-and-large promote hatred and racism, but there is a grand narrative found within the divergent texts used in both institutions that creates a sense of something not fitting, an uncomfortable awareness that a powerful form socialization is at play.

It is my belief that the methods of education used by these Diasporic communities have a major impact on the way that Jews perceive themselves, each other and their relationship to the conflict in Israel/Palestine, reinforcing Zionist ideology, beliefs, and a sense that unwavering loyalty and support for the homeland is something worth defending at all costs. Reevaluating the significance of educational materials and the images found within them, the ideological nature of language and discourses of power will potentially create and develop a dialogue into the conflict, self-reflexive understanding, and perhaps hope for peace. My

assumption is that the kinds of educational resources used by Diasporic

communities would be similar to types of resources used in the homeland or draw

upon materials from the homeland, given the ideological, emotional and political

ties associated with Diaspora groups and their homelands.

Chapter 1-Methodology

The first section of this project will be a highly detailed, discursive exploration of theories of power relations, education and the links between Diaspora, community, mythology, language and ideology. Upon completion of the theoretical assumptions, I will attempt to use these theories to break down individual series of textbooks used in classrooms, discussing the impact of narratives, images and text, demonstrating that often times the images are entirely out of context from the apparent purpose of the lessons themselves. These issues with textbook construction and curriculum design demonstrates the need to question why these images are present and how they reinforce narratives of dual identity, Zionism and the relationship between mythology, history, ideology and language.

For the study, I attempted to complete a comparative analysis of eighty-two textbooks from two institutions, the Edmonton Talmud Torah and the Calgary Jewish Academy. These textbooks varied from being published by major Jewish publishing houses across North America and Israel to course packs and curriculum manuals designed and produced in house. The grade levels of the books varied from Grades one through nine.

In order to gain a more thorough understanding of the conditions I am describing, the theoretical breakdown will include an overview of what visual culture and Diaspora represent. As well, I will attempt a discursive examination of the role of mythology as history and how this mythology serves as justification to

one side's claims while simultaneously invalidating the position of the other, serving

the interests of the Israeli state and reinforcing the politicization of Zionism.[3]

WJT Mitchell (1994) describes the problem of "Word and Image" (3), two

realms that were forced into distinct camps when dealing with issues of politics and

representation, due to anxieties felt surrounding the formalities of the differences

between "a culture of reading and a culture of spectatorship (3). Mitchell contends

this separation of realms has been institutionalized into contemporary western

understanding of identity, of representation, and into the very essence of "truth

beauty and excellence" and that the idea of a visual culture critique, one that blurs

these distinctions is a very necessary counter-hegemonic force. Books, for example

have historically contained images, equally as powerful to the reader/viewer as the

text itself. Foucault (1970, 9; cf. Mitchell, 5) contends that the "relation of language

to painting is an infinite relation" thus blurring what Mitchell refers to as

"ideological fault lines" (5) as no media, be it verbal or visual, is purely one or the

other. Foucault's theory of Power/Knowledge is dependant upon the blurring of

these lines, exposing a necessary "rift between the discursive and the visible, the

seeable and the sayable, as the crucial fault-line in the scopic regimes of modernity"

(Mitchell, 12). That is to suggest that the language is only a part of the total sensory

experience without forcing language or visual culture to be reduced to an all-

---

[3] Zionism itself is a tricky word to define, as to many, it is simply the emotional connection that Jews have to the land of Israel. Historically it was a Western Jewish social movement with labor socialist roots, but over time it has changed form and meaning and can be interpreted in a number of ways ranging from this emotional perception to a political and ideological movement that seeks to defend and Israel at all times.

encompassing universal theory of meaning and representation.[4]

> Ideological critique cannot simply enter the discussion of the image, or the text-image difference as a super-method. It intervenes and is subject to intervention by its object… This notion of iconology is both critical and dialectical. It does not rest in a master code, an ultimate horizon of History, Language, Mind, Nature, Being, or any other abstract principle, but asks us to return to the scene of the crime, the scene of greeting between Subjects-between the speaking and the seeing, Subject, the ideologist and the iconologist (Mitchell, 30, irregular capitalizations in the original).

This is where the importance of understanding the intersection of image and text comes into play, why I will be examining not just what is written on the page, but how images and texts interact with each other, and with culture, ideology, language, and Diaspora.

Images allows viewers to place themselves inside of something, without limiting the need to inscribe meaning on the exclusively writers and words (Rogoff, 2002, 15). Taking Derrida's idea of differance, a state between differing and deferring, visual culture theories tend to seek an explanation free of the binaries, flowing through words and into images to find meaning. It is, as Rogoff claims, "the visual articulation of the continuous displacement of meaning in the field of vision and the visible" (180). It is a new look at an old problem, really, one that allows individuals to interpret meaning of images and spaces. The idea of visual culture is to examine who and what any discourse is actually speaking to as opposed to just speaking about and criticizing the discourse as the subject itself (ibid, 18).

> The field is made up of at least three different components. First, there are images that come into being and are claimed by various and often-contested histories. Second, there are the viewing apparatuses that we have at our disposal that are guided by cultural models such as

---

[4]This is despite the fact that many scholars of such a shift became trapped in the sort of master narratives they were trying to avoid, such as Panofksy's concept of iconology and Crary, whose obvious indebtedness to Foucault did not save them from falling into a reductionist trap (Mitchell, 14-16)

narrative or technology. Third, there are subjectivities of identification or desire or abjection from which we view and by which we inform what we view...it is clearly one of the most interesting aspects of visual culture that have boundary lines between making, theorizing and historicizing have been greatly eroded and no longer exist in exclusive distinction from one another, (Rogoff, 18).

For the purposes of this study, the third component Rogoff establishes is perhaps the most critical, as it substantiates the subjective nature of interpretation of images by the viewers themselves, building a social-psychological link between the way any individual perceives what they see in relation to themselves. This moves knowledge and identity into a position where the space between the binaries can be explored, acknowledging the instability of the normative and essentialist discourse established by these binary relationships. Although Rogoff's own work is limited to working with artists, "writing with an artist's work rather than about it," (26), these same theoretical formulations can be utilized to explore narratives found inside any sort of image or symbol, and how these images can be used to reconstitute identities.

Nicholas Mirzoeff takes on this idea of finding identity in the visual, specifically in the notion that Diaspora cannot be fully known, "especially by its own members" (205). This paradoxical identification through lack of identity is almost the antithesis of the modern nation state, which is in essence an "imagined community" (Mirzoeff, 2002, 205; Anderson 1991). Anderson further exemplifies this, particularly through his examination of the evolution of languages as tools of nationalism and state building (Anderson, 1991, 13-15, 22, 76-79), in the context of both the death of sacred languages and the rise of print languages as the language of the state.

In the context of the Jewish Diaspora, past traditions and past trauma link the

community together, as well as the common bond of a lost homeland. Since the (re)creation of the homeland, Diaspora art has focused as much on the past, on loss and trauma while reconciling the new vision of the future of the people with this loss. Mirzoeff brings a notion of intertextuality and intervisuality into his analysis of the field that is relevant to understanding how textbook imagery can be interpreted by its viewers: "A diasporic image can create multiple visual and intellectual associations both within and beyond the intent of the producer of that image" (209). This demonstrates the ability for the reader of a textbook to internalize his/her own subject position beyond the intentionality of the author or the illustrator, allowing even children to internalize the power and meaning of an image they happen to view. To study identity in terms of power can be viewed as an attempt to sketch the relative power and the hierarchies obtaining among individuals in their own estimation and in the estimations of others (Gross, 2006, 605).

Chapter 2-Theory

2.1-Diaspora Definitions

Much of the subfield of Diaspora Studies focuses on inter-group organization and problems associated with migration and integration into the new host countries while maintaining a sense of living "At home, abroad" (Sheffer, 2003). Due to the relatively recent creation of the subfield, it is my intention to delve deeper into the potential problems that diasporic communities face while interacting with each other in host countries. The Jewish people have a long history of being a diasporic community. Traditionally, the term Diaspora was linked almost exclusively to the Jewish and (to a lesser extent) Greek Diasporas that have been in existence for more than two millennia. However, this idea is not entirely accurate historically or in the present context of the globalized world. As such, the concept of the Diaspora is a subject that has been misused, misunderstood and sometimes feared (Sheffer, 2003). Until approximately 1975, the term Diaspora was primarily defined as a Jewish historical matter, (Oxford Dictionary; Webster's Dictionary; cf. Sheffer, 9), given that the Jewish people have been living in diasporic community organizations since approximately 586BC, the time of the Babylonian exile and destruction of Solomon's temple (Sheffer, 2003; Scharfstein 1994). Sheffer alludes to scholarship beyond biblical mythology that dates back nearly one thousand years prior to this, to the Jewish migration to Egypt followed by their need to escape to avoid enslavement and persecution in their host country.

The various stories from the Old Testament (Tanach) about the Jewish

People demonstrate the way that the state-linked and stateless diasporas function. This mythology is commonly taught to the Jewish community as legitimate history, serving to emphasize the biblical link between the Jewish communities past and present. Throughout the (debated) first exile, during the Babylonian reign over Israel, the Jewish Diaspora communities were linked to a specific state that was historically their own. Upon the second exile, the state link was broken, as Israel ceased to exist as the Jewish homeland. The evolution to the early-modern Jewish Diaspora is obvious only in its physical statelessness. The Jewish Diaspora as a visible entity had maintained its position of statelessness in its own unique way. Traditions and customs linked the people to the state, including the tradition in the Ashkenazi (European, excluding Spain) school of Jewish thought that maintains the direction of prayer in Synagogues must always be in the direction closest to Jerusalem. In North America and Europe, that direction is east. This tradition is centuries old, but has been maintained despite the return to control over Israel. In this subjective and symbolic way, however, the Jewish Diaspora was never truly stateless, linked to a space through centuries of tradition and faith in the idea that Israel would be returned to the Jewish people someday.

This brings up the question of what kind of Diaspora the Jewish people have. To use the categories Gabriel Sheffer (2003) has defined, is the Jewish Diaspora a cultural and religious, ethno-national Diaspora or has it become a state-linked Diaspora of both the historical and modern varieties, or has it essentially become a glorified incipient Israeli Diaspora? It is my belief that the Jewish Diaspora is simultaneously all of these types, causing much of the power imbalance and tension

between the Israeli state and Diaspora communities. These questions require something of a detailed account of the origins of the Jewish Diaspora, one that has undergone five distinct shifts in sociopolitical organization, which are critical to the understanding of the contemporary problem, especially in the context of Diaspora education.

To place into context Sheffer's analysis of Diaspora, and specifically the Jewish Diaspora, I have split up the periods of time into five distinct ruptures or emergences, which follow the flow of linear time, but exist independently and sometimes concurrently as unique mythological historical moments. This conflation between history and myth must be maintained and utilized in the context of this study, as this mythological history is often taught as absolute historical fact in both religious and secular Jewish schools, including my own. It has become ingrained in the collective consciousness of the Jewish people that the religious stories are also an historical document, mapping the existence of the religion and culture since the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The first era of Diaspora was the period of time between the exodus from Egypt and the Babylonian period of Jewish history. At this point, a state known as Israel was the Jewish homeland, but the geographical borders of this place are not identical to the contemporary country of Israel. This Israel spanned a much larger geographical distance, including much of contemporary Syria and parts of Jordan and Iraq. According to mythological records, this Israel spanned from the Red Sea to the Euphrates River. There was a small but significant Jewish Diaspora, one that was established by choice since the exodus and was maintained by an innovative

Diaspora network; essentially the formation of a state-linked network between families and friends and the establishment of strong, viable Jewish communities throughout the middle east and northern Africa (Sheffer, 43). This period is characterized by voluntary migration and also represents the first wave of archeological and historical evidence placing Jewish power in Israel and Jewish diasporic development in other areas throughout Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor (Levine and Mazar, 2001, cf. Sheffer, 43).[5]

According to mythological and religious interpretations, due to political and religious tensions, the Jewish kingdom formed by Kings David and Solomon split into Israel in the North and Judea in the South. Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, who dispersed the population throughout the northern parts of the Middle East and into Asia Minor. This event is, at least according to Sheffer, the moment where the ten tribes were lost (43) creating a mythology of missing Jews that has been sustained in Jewish Diaspora narratives since. The Assyrians were reportedly brutal to the peoples that they conquered, routinely exiling the elites and leadership class to avoid the potential for revolution. The actual whereabouts of the Assyrian exiles remains "shrouded in mystery" (Sheffer, 44). This is also the first moment in Jewish mythological history where members of the community shifted from willingly living outside the homeland to being a stateless body.

The Babylonians, who, unlike the Assyrians, did not forcibly colonize the occupied territories, later conquered the concurrent kingdom of Judea; however

---

[5] The actual legitimacy of some archeological artifacts dating back to this era has come into question in recent years. According to David Samuels, there has been an increase in forged artifacts including some of the "most biblical famed relics in Israel" (Samuels, 2004, 48).

they did remove elites and destroy Solomon's temple. Yet due to the large number of preexisting Diaspora communities in the territories occupied by the Babylonians, the Diaspora, specifically the city of Babylon, became the center of Jewish culture, power and thought. Thus, the beginnings of the historical ethno-national Jewish Diaspora began to take shape (ibid, 45 cf. Tadmor, 1969, 151). The Babylonian rulers did not persecute their conquered peoples and allowed free migration between territories, extending the Jewish Diaspora from long-standing communities in Egypt and Asia Minor deep into Babylon, central Asia and even as far north as the Balkans. By the time the Persians had conquered Babylon under the reign of Cyrus the Great, the Jewish community had begun to revolve around the Diaspora, as opposed to the devastated homeland left behind.

> Indeed, the elites of the Jewish Diaspora during the Babylonian and Persian Empires succeeded in further crystallizing national cultural and religious sentiments, beliefs and customs…The Babylonian Jews created what can be called an autonomous trans-state diasporic political system, in which the Diaspora rather than the homeland became the national center and played the crucial role in the nation's perseverance (Sheffer, 2003, 45).

This system remained in place despite the Persian emphasis on return to traditional homelands and the re-creation of a politically and culturally autonomous Israel, which led to the building of the second temple and the second (short lived) golden age of historical/mythological Jewish control of Israel, while maintaining strong ties to the diasporic centers established in the previous few hundred years.

All this changed during the Greek and subsequent Roman conquests of the region. Under the initial Greek rule, Israel remained partially autonomous, but the desire for Hellenic conversion created several uprisings leading to the dispersion of some from the Holy Land. However the Greek empire under Alexander the Great was so vast that the Jewish Diaspora, (not counting those who were exiled by the

Assyrians), and homeland was essentially all under the same rule, but were intermixed with the Greek Diaspora. This created the first step towards the idea of integration with continuity to create safety for the communities (Sheffer, 46). This idea of integration would eventually become the basis for the contemporary Diaspora in democratic host countries throughout the last few centuries, with obviously mixed results (ibid).

The Roman conquest ended the notion of a Jewish homeland in Israel, relegating the Jewish community to being what Sheffer refers to as an historical state-linked Diaspora. I would argue that this label would be incorrect, as the dream of the state became something of a mythological construct, a dream that existed in the religious and cultural discourses of the European and Arabian Diasporas, but unlike the previous era of exile where the state still existed in some form or another, with an active network of communication between the Diaspora and the homeland, such a network ceased to exist in a powerful and institutionalized way until 1948.

Thus we have the third rupture, making the Jewish people a de facto stateless ethno-national Diaspora, never truly at home regardless of the efforts to integrate into the social landscape of the host-nations they lived in, relegated to a perpetual roving group of outsiders living often in segregated communities in European states. This is where the initial emergence of Ashkenazi traditions vs. Sephardic traditions, ranging from religious interpretation and philosophy to education to language, as each group developed their own dialects (Aramaic, Ladino and Yiddish amongst others) while learning the local tongues of the host countries, again creating the lifestyle of integration with continuity. In Middle Eastern, Northern African and

Persian states, the Jews had significantly different living conditions and relations with the local communities of the host countries, as well as the emergence Mizrahi traditions and languages from the Middle East and Asia

The fourth rupture was the (re)creation of the modern State of Israel, which led to the re-labeling of the Jewish Diaspora as a modern state-linked group, beginning with the initial Zionist movement in the 1890s and obviously peaking with the actual formation of the state five decades after the initial settlement began. This wave brought with it the rebirth of the Jewish Diaspora as state-linked, while simultaneously restoring the idea of the Jewish people abroad as an Ethno-national Diaspora group with new loyalties, new ties and a rebirth in Jewish culture centered on the historical and modern connection to the land. I have chosen the term "(re)creation" as a symbolic way of understanding that this current state of Israel is somewhat different from past incarnations of the state, given its sociopolitical makeup, the boundaries and borders, and the disputed territories that exist in a quasi-occupied state, as well as the disputed nature of the people who live there. This term, "(re)creation," signifies both a return to the past and a break from it, a new beginning for the Jewish people to have a state to call home, yet this state's existence is mired by conflict and controversy.

Finally, the fifth emergence was that of an actual Israeli Diaspora, one that, like the first phase, was taken up by choice. This Diaspora group is distinct from the greater Jewish Diaspora in that they are Israeli nationals who have chosen to leave the homeland and settle abroad. This particular group has its own unique set of affiliations, organizations and set of identities that is fundamentally different from

the Jewish Diaspora, despite the people of this group belonging to the Jewish faith (ibid, 152). The particular evolution of life in Israel, being a part of the (re)creation has given Israeli Jews a unique status amongst the greater Jewish community, and are often labeled as "Israelis" rather than "Jews" in terms of their own affiliations and cultural self-identification.

2.2-Diasporic Identity and Otherness

I am neither the first person in my greater diasporic community to critically explore my own identity vis-à-vis my supposed culture, nor am I the first to examine the role of living in the Diaspora and the challenges presented by it. I have come across several scholars and artists who have raised similar questions to my own. Some scholars like Irit Rogoff and R.B. Kitaj, are Jews, but many, like Stuart Hall, Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, are members of other Diaspora groups. The common ground shared is that all the scholars explore the history of post-colonial nations and the roots of Diaspora as a philosophical and social entity. The questions were concerned with the idea of the "other" and who is the "other" throughout history in any given society, a common narrative within both Diaspora and postcolonial studies. The position of Jews, being such a long established Diasporic group all over the world, is that Jews have always been the other, and remain the other even in the face of having a homeland. As a culture, Jews were the perennial outsider in every place they ever lived, but certainly not the only outsider. It makes the idea of intolerance towards the Palestinian community's very existence one that is fraught with irony and hypocrisy.

There is a perpetual sense of otherness that comes from being in a Diaspora community, one that is not necessarily obvious, but is always present. Just knowing that I was different and socialized to believe in this difference, even though I look very similar to the majority of people I grew up with, was enough to make me start to ask questions, enough to give me a sort of alienating angst and branch out. Really, this angst made me want to integrate myself even more. This sentiment is

surprisingly common amongst Jews past and present given the historical dangers associated with being Jewish.

The idea of a Jewish homeland is one source of unification that Jews worldwide had been holding on to for centuries as a source of inspiration and hope for a better life than the one in the Diaspora could ever historically offer. The idea of a Jewish homeland lends itself to the notion that Jews would be safe from harm and not be the "other" for a change. A homeland would provide a chance to survive and grow without the restrictions on faith, business and social life that bound the Jewish communities to the fringes of whatever host countries they were living in tended to have in place for Jews. Now that the state exists, Jews from around the world have gone there to start new lives, yet the majority still live at home abroad, keeping the Diaspora strong.

The emphasis placed upon the collective wellbeing of the community in Diaspora seems to be put above all things by the community leaders themselves. We exist in the Diaspora because we always have. R.B Kitaj makes a passing reference to the idea of a symbolic "Jewish Heartland of the mind," a sort of Diasporist identity that, like "one's Jewish-ness itself, changes all the time" (ibid, 41), not limited to the idea of Jerusalem or even a city like New York, which has been a major contemporary diasporic center of Jewish life, but a level of consciously comfortable living in a space that feels like home, even when it may not be.

> Because neither Diaspora nor Israel can really live happily ever after anyway (or so it increasingly seems) and a normative coexistence replaces the normalcy once wished upon the state, many of us who make our lives in our dispersion follow *its* peculiar, various, often very homelike, very complex destinies, where as someone put it, Jews have achieved emancipation without auto-emancipation (Kitaj, 38-39, emphasis in original).

But how does a community that exists in so many places find a sense of unity and

togetherness? Such a notion, given the levels of difference within Jewish communities around the world, seems almost an impossibility, like Kitaj alludes to, yet this sense of community and unity is always stressed as a part of grand Jewish narratives expressed in community institutions like synagogues and schools. He makes a reference in the first of his manifestos to the idea that being a Jew is to be a Believer; whatever you believe in, that's what you are. "A Jew is a Jew like a table is a table," (ibid, 37). If you are a Jew, then that is what you are, even if you have a whole host of other labels. A Jew's essential Jewish-ness just is, and will not be debated whether you are practicing and religious or secular and making the "classic assimilationist pose" (37).

The question of what it is to be a Jew is a philosophical idea debated by Jews constantly, in the classroom, in art, at synagogue, and even in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset (ibid, 37), while the link between the Diaspora and Jewish-ness has become something of a way of life. My own purpose as a writer is to question, to learn, and explore something that is historically and symbolically linked to Jewish traditions of never ending study. I was fortunate enough to stumble across two other artists, Camile Pissaro and R.B. Kitaj entirely by accident, yet the questions they explore with their art, photographs and words are remarkably similar to my own. The artists Camile Pissarro and R.B. Kitaj both took their Jewish-ness and made it the subject of much of their art and activism. Pissarro's story is rooted in the fact that he neither accepted nor denied his identity, but was able to integrate into an anti-Semitic community in France at the peak of the Dreyfus affair.

Pissarro used his art to make radical political statements supporting Dreyfus,

and had physical traits and ailments that were often associated with being Jewish, like his colorblindness. Yet he was able to walk through crowded markets in Paris with people shouting "death to the Jews" and not even be noticed as one of them: "The Jew in the heart of the metropole was the stuff of anti-Semitic nightmares. Pissarro stood the old chestnut on its head and made the passage of the Caribbean Jew across modern Paris the very subject of his work," (Mirzoff, 73).

Kitaj has a somewhat safer story, using the notion of diasporism as a method of defining and interpreting his own inspiration, culminating in the writing of his two Diasporist Manifestos in 1989 and 2007. These manifestos were designed with the intent of explaining his diasporic roots and how this identity became the central, unifying force of all his art. He is quick to point out that Jewish-ness is not a requirement to create "Diasporist Painting" a term that he "just made up" (34) to describe how his identity is intertwined with location, both in terms of physical place, and the location of culture within any individual.

> Diasporism is my own school, neither particularly unhappy practice nor proud persuasion. I would simply say it is an unsettled mode of art-life, performed by a painter who feels out of place much of the time, even when he is lucky enough to stay at work in his room, unmolested through most of his days… It is not for me to spell out the quite various diasporic conditions proliferating everywhere now except to say that Jews do not own the Diaspora; they are not the only Diasporists by a long shot. They are merely mine (Kitaj, 34-35).

Like Kitaj before me, I have always been a Jew of the Diaspora, but never really had a sense for what that means, not necessarily sure what being a Jew represented outside of the religious context.

2.3-On Mythology and Community

There is a place within Jewish culture to identify as a secular Jew, one who is associated with the religion, but only in the most indirect sense. The very idea of being a secular member of a religious group seems somewhat contradictory and oxymoronic, but it is very much a symptom of living in the Diaspora. Integration and assimilation seem like the safest bet given the Jewish collective history. To not look or act like a Jew, much like in the case of Pissarro, can be lifesaving. But in spite of all of this historical self-referencing, it has gotten harder and harder to identify myself as a part of the very community that I am studying, bringing in yet another layer to the subjective nature of the self-other debate. This is not meant as a grand reference to a mythological and quasi-historical meta-narrative, but rather to demonstrate the concept that throughout Jewish history, there has been a pervasive feeling of insecurity, of wanting to blend in out of a sense of fear of being found out as that alien presence. This meta-narrative is a large part of Jewish mythos to be sure, but for a people bound together by little more than tradition, this mythos has taken a life of its own within the Jewish Diaspora, becoming a part of history and collective consciousness in the process.

Maurice Blanchot (1991) and Jean Luc Nancy (1988) interrogate the operation and function of community in such a way that seems to challenge the very notion that community can even exist. This challenge to the idea of community is the very heart of the existential and epistemic problem that I am trying to work out: what is a community? Can this community in the Diaspora function independently from the state that it is supposedly aligned with? This question is not something that

can necessarily be answered, as the idea of community is something that is as much psychological and emotional as it is social and political. How one comes to feel a part of something greater than the individual while retaining a sense of autonomy is most certainly a challenging idea (Durkheim, 1897/1974). There is a feeling that comes with community that interrelates language, custom and tradition, and this concept has long been a part of what made up the Jewish community, both in the Diaspora and more recently since the creation of Israel. Nancy makes a reference to this type of situation through the telling of a story, of myth framed as history, discussing the origins and emergences of a people who were once dispersed and found themselves together again, as the beginnings of all stories, as myth making a community what it is though the transmission and repetition of the myths as history, and as stories, as organization and as truth (Nancy, 43-47).

Community, according to Nancy takes place for others and through others, and is made up of a collection of I's who are always others (Nancy, 15-17). It also reveals itself through the death of others. Yet communities tend to occupy a singular space, a space of safety, where this collection of I's can become a singular we, drawn together for any number of social, political, moral or religious reasons. Community acts as space itself as well as the spacing of experience. At the same time it is outside the spacing of experience and outside the self, as it is outside of the individual's inner experience while still maintaining that desire for connection and belonging to the world outside the self.

Both Nancy and Blanchot discuss the link between the community and death, alluding to Bataille's idea that community is revealed by and takes place through the

death of others (Blanchot, 3-4). This idea is certainly valid; it is incredible how a tragedy tends to bring people together, yet this kind of togetherness is often marked with the words "next time we are together it should be under happier circumstances" or something equally based in sentimentality though rarely followed through. Death is the time that people gather together as a part of a group to lament the loss of an individual, or, in some cases, as Blanchot alludes, the time when an entire group will die together for the sake of preserving some form of greater good or community ideal, an example of which is the story of Massada. Stories about death have become all the more prevalent in Jewish collective discourse and collective memory, ranging from the annual repetition of the story of Passover to the expulsion from Spain to, of course, the Holocaust. This of course validates Nancy's conception that mythology and community define each other (Nancy, 41).

This particular story, Massada, is one of the more powerful myths of Jewish culture. It is the tale of an entire community of Jews known as the Zealots, who lived inside a mountain fortress called Massada, and were so devoted to their cause that they chose ritual suicide over the being captured by the Romans and either forced to be converted or be enslaved. This story dates back to approximately 70A.D and the ruins of the fortress still remain in Israel today (Scharfstein, 1993). This story has inspired both tremendous pride and also a sense of deep shame and loss, exactly the sort of concept that Blanchot alludes to. This ritualistic death is the sort of moment that communities will come together for, whether it is to sacrifice the group in favor of an ideal, or to remember the tragic loss of any one member of the community for any reason at all. Death acts as a binding social force, to celebrate the lives that were

and to pass on the sense of togetherness to those that survive. This type of moment, combining death, mourning and memory, is where the collection of I's that Nancy alludes to really become something of a singular we, a single force united together by the loss of another.

Blanchot discusses the idea of community association as something that individuals do to feel a part of something, to fill a void or satisfy unincompleteness in the individuals' lives, something Bataille refers to as inner experience (Bataille, 1954, cf. Blanchot, 3-5). The following of tradition hardly seems like people filling a void; more often than not, the secular community does it out of a sense of obligation, honor and duty to the past as opposed to feeling incomplete without the traditions. It rather characterizes the nature of this particular community and how it interacts. Culturally speaking, the Jewish community by and large has thrived upon tragedy as a source of unity, something to keep the religion alive beyond mere religious dogma. From the story of exodus (Passover) to the exile in Babylon and the atrocities that make up the story of Esther, celebrated on Purim, through to the battle against the Greeks that later became known as the holiday of Hanukkah, there is a long standing biblical tradition of gathering together as a community and collectively bearing witness to tragedy. This has the capacity to turn the negativity surrounding the loss of life into festivals celebrating the ability for the community to keep living despite the odds that were perpetually and historically against the Jewish people.

This is the reader-witness that Blanchot (1991, 24) alludes to with the recounting of the exodus, a concept that he trivializes as a "hasty participation," a tradition of bearing witness to the past while maintaining ties to the present. Yet

there is no haste about this tradition; it is a rather painstaking and deliberate process to prepare for, one that involves a complete purging of the home to purify and sanctify it so that all the conditions necessary to replicate a fraction of the suffering can be established. At the Seder table, everyone reads and participates, from the youngest child to the eldest patriarchs and matriarchs of the family and community, these are the traditions to which the Jewish people are bound, and it is of no less importance than the gathering prior to the Yom Kippur fast. These traditions, including the retelling of the story of Moses, help keep the people bound to a set of traditions and myths. The final Passover reading repeats the hope that Moses shared with his people more than 4000 years ago, "next year in Jerusalem," a sort of proto-Zionism that is embedded in the traditions taught year after year-not a modern, political Zionism, but simply a dream that one day the children of Israel would find their way home.

The most interesting part of the recounting of Jewish historical tragedies is really in the involvement of the state of Israel, and how so much has changed in the perception of what Israel represents, the idea of it in the Diaspora as opposed to the actual state itself. Prior to the creation of Israel in 1948, the dream of "Next Year in Jerusalem" was just that; a dream that was so far away from reality that it had a sort of mythical connotation, like discovering Atlantis or the lost Mayan capital. Now, it does exist, yet the conditions for Jews have drastically changed with it, reinforcing and even institutionalizing the link between mythology and community through the power dynamics of the state and its emotional impact on the community worldwide.

Israel's existence presents a challenge to Jewish communities across the

globe. Given the historical connection to Israel, the tradition of having an incredibly strong, organized Diaspora network as well as the religious mythology attached to the land, the question of loyalty to the homeland becomes all the more immediate. Since Israel was (re)born, several new Jewish institutions have been created throughout various regions of the Diaspora. The strength of these organizations, according to Sheffer (233), is heavily dependent on the level of freedoms and tolerance that Jews receive in their varying host countries. Western democracies, especially Canada and the United States, tend to be the most open, while the former Soviet Union and other eastern European nations as well as some countries under Islamic rule tended to be less supportive of Jewish agencies (ibid, 232; Sowell, 1996). These agencies, to varying degrees, have Zionist agendas, and often have locally organized Jewish defense organizations to combat anti-Semitism in the host nations. Criticism directed towards Israel tends to receive harsh counter-criticism as potential anti-Semitic behavior (Sheffer, 221). This is part of the problem of the switch to a modern, ethno-national state-linked Diaspora from a previously stateless Diaspora. Different rules apply, different identities maintained, different perspectives and beliefs espoused by leaders of the individual communities. Now that a homeland has been established, it becomes a necessity to create strong ties to that home.

This is where questions of loyalty come into play, specifically in the role of these institutions and their relationship to the homeland. New discourses and power relationships need to be created, structured, and regulated, with the balance maintained between Zionism and Judaism, almost like the reinforcement of a

modern separation of church and state. Yet this shift has elements where that is forgotten, such as the annual State of Israel bond drive that takes place in Synagogues and community centers every year over the high holidays, either during Rosh Hashanah (The New Year) or Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) where a leader in the community makes a passionate plea for the members of individual communities to pledge their financial support for Israel on a day when it is actually *a sin to carry money and make financial transactions.*

In schools, every classroom (at least in Edmonton) contains a little blue box where students are encouraged to place loose change. This box is for the JNF, Jewish National Fund, a program designed for the people of the Diaspora to donate to Israel's tree planting fund. It is as if charity in the Jewish community can only be to Jewish agencies, of which much of the funding is returned directly to the homeland. This acts as a manifestation of the principles of Tikkun Olam, insofar as tzdakah (charity) is an aspect of Tikkun Olam that is given an incredible amount of importance and value; helping to develop Israel is the first step towards healing the world, stemming partially from the biblical myth centered around the coming of the Messiah and partially out of the desire to maintain Israel financially. Furthermore, the role of the JNF is actually included as a part of the curriculum centered on Zionism at the Edmonton Talmud Torah (EPSB 2000b) for fifth grade students, adding another element of the institutionalization of Zionist discursive practice into the education system. This leads to new questions of both self and community identification and loyalty; the answers seem to point directly towards Israel first and the local community second, making a case for the notion that Jewish culture is

becoming Israeli culture, that Jewish needs are Israeli needs, yet Israeli needs are not necessarily Jewish needs, begging the need to question whether Zionism and Judaism can really be mutually exclusive.

According to Sheffer, there is a growing resistance to this notion of Israeli socioeconomic and political hegemony over the Diaspora, but this resistance appears to ebb and flow at different times. Usually during times of war in Israel, there is more support for its survival, while in peacetime there is more resistance to Israeli involvement with local affairs. This hegemony, however, is an implicit one, dependant upon the emotional wellbeing of Diaspora citizens, as Israel has stated as a matter of policy that it will not interfere with local community decisions (Sheffer, 235). Yet because of the emotional ties that the Diaspora has to Israel, due to the religious mythology and two thousand year absence of a Jewish state, it is easy to see why Diaspora communities have so much passion for Israel and a desire to help and support the nation and its governmental policies. The community agencies have a self-adopted responsibility to the state of Israel, and as such have a practice of institutionalized Zionist agenda setting. This extends from local chapters of B'nai Brith to the National Jewish Agency, to synagogue and school curriculum development and the languages of instruction used in Jewish schools. If all the other Jewish agencies appear to have a practice of Zionist agenda setting, even on the most implicit level, it is logical to suggest that Jewish day schools in the Diaspora would have a similar set of policies. This is all in play despite the existence of the Ben Gurion - Blaustein agreement of 1951 that specifically states that Israeli agents and agencies will in no way interfere with the day to day affairs of Diaspora Jewry or

infringe on loyalties of local communities towards their host countries (Sheffer,

235).

2.4-(Re)Birth of a Language

With the (re)birth of Israel came the (re)birth of Hebrew, a dead language for more than 1600 years. Formerly limited to usage in religious contexts alone, Hebrew came back to a more quotidian life. Traditions of Diaspora are replaced with new traditions of Israel. Jewish culture and community are suddenly forced to make this change in the Diaspora as well, all but eliminating Yiddish as a conversational language in Jewish homes, and relegating Ladino to the status of a minority language and Sephardic traditions to the fringes of Jewish culture. There appears to almost be a hierarchical relationship within Judaism, one that has given Ashkenazi Jews the majority of power and influence, both in terms of religious interpretation and secular community arrangement, in the Diaspora as well as within the homeland. This shift in community identification is quite significant; once the languages taught depended on where your family was from, whereas now that Israel exists again, Hebrew is the language of the Jews. Yiddish and Ladino are othered languages within a community once unified by its inherent difference from the rest of the world, a difference that was worn throughout all the tragedies that were turned into celebrations.[6]

Levinas (1987) and Derrida (1972) make reference to the idea of a past that

---

[6] There is a third Jewish Diaspora group, known as the Mizrahi Jews that also existed. These Jews are generally the Jews that lived throughout the Middle East and Asia, including the Indian subcontinent. They had their own sets of traditions and languages, more often then not adopting local languages and had their own versions of Hebrew that evolved from thousands of years living abroad. The different dialects of Mizrahi Hebrew tended to vary based on the region of Asia each individual community lived in and is remarkably different from Modern Hebrew. This group is even further down the hierarchical ladder and given their history, they have had a much harder time integrating into contemporary Jewish and Israeli societies. The Mizrahi Jews also had a dialect of Arabic that was influenced by Hebrew, known as Judeo-Arabic (Blau, 1999, cf. Sheffer 2003).

has never been present. This temporality is something that affects the use of language and time. Hebrew is a language that fits this notion rather well; there is a rupture in the usage of Hebrew as a conversational and cultural language over the course of Jewish history, a long gap between its death and rebirth existed, making the language one of almost exclusively written text to keep the word of God alive and nothing more. According to De Saussure, the spoken form of any language often comes before the written, so as Hebrew was (re)born, it was only natural for it to be spoken before a new version of the written Hebrew came to be. In *Of Grammatology* (1967), Derrida overturns this myth of presence, de-centering the "phonocentric" view of language and shifting more attention to the visual (Derrida, 1967 cf. Mitchell, 1994, 12). (Ecriture…encompassment of visual) However this concept of a linguistic rupture is more along the lines of Foucault's perspectives on origin and emergence of knowledge and ideas in *The Order of Things* (1970). Hebrew in its current form is a markedly different language from what it once was, emerging out of something long lost and into something new, with new sets of script, of pronunciation, even vowel structures that are new and modernized compared to the traditional, biblical structure of the language.

This rupture between its uses is perhaps the most important and obviously political problem with using Hebrew at all. There was no strong, traditional Hebrew past to speak of for at least 1000 years, maybe longer. Languages of the European and Asian Diasporas began to replace Hebrew as the languages used in Diaspora. Yet Hebrew culture and Jewish culture are structurally positioned in schools as one and the same, despite this complete rupture in the history of the language vis-à-vis the

history of the culture. It is rather obvious that the language and people went in completely alterior trajectories until the (re)birth of Israel. This moment is the crux of it all, the "Political Event" (Badiou, 1973) when the Jews stopped being a Stateless Diaspora, the Palestinians started to become this stateless body, and a dead language becomes resurrected, forming a link to the past that has never been truly present aside from mythological tradition, yet coming across as both historically and linguistically accurate.

Derrida (1991) discusses the way divergent languages come to be in Tours de Babel (The Tower of Babel), deconstructing a centuries old biblical tale on the origins of language. In this deconstruction, Derrida makes reference to the origins of language and how languages have become both politicized and subject to the way communities utilize and change their meanings over time, setting up a debate between presence and absence of the self. One of the most unusual assertions Derrida makes regarding the diversity of languages is that after a certain point, roots no longer seem to matter. Ultimately, all things are translations and translations of translations, which inevitably leads to confusion. Babel, (or Bavel in Hebrew), loosely signifies both confusion and the city of God.

This idea even relates to the story of the Tower of Babel itself, which, like Noah's arc, is also a translation of another epic story that found its way into the Old Testament/Jewish Torah, which was written in ancient Hebrew. Yet the supposed original language, which was spoken at the moment when God supposedly dispersed the language in favor of multiple new languages is not known, nor, based on the mythology, could not be known, due to the revelation of God's name which

was unpronounceable and not supposed to be known, and if it were to be known, it is said to cause madness and confusion in whomever speaks it. This emphasizes the confusion in the nature of languages.

The biblical Hebrew used to tell the story was itself a translation of the long-forgotten original. Furthermore, the current incarnation of Hebrew has little in common with the biblical Hebrew that shares its name, alphabet and vowel structure. To draw a parallel, biblical Hebrew has about as much in common with Modern Hebrew as old English does with contemporary British English. Much is shared as far as syntax and structure, but as a conversational tongue, they are almost entirely different. However, the critical difference in this comparison is that old English evolved into what is now Modern English, whereas Hebrew ceased to be a language of conversation and regular daily use within the culture that used it. It was relegated to a literary and religious language alone, much like Latin and Sanskrit, having only a mythological and nostalgic value to the community.

This is where Derrida's notion of intra-lingual translation applies, in relation to the rebirth of a dead language. Beyond the confusion of bringing back an archaic tongue, one is now forced to translate the language through the use of the same linguistic signs, "presupposing how one can know in the final analysis how to determine rigorously the unity and identity of a language, the decidable form of its limits" (Derrida, 1991, 253).

The irony of this situation is that the purpose for the return of Hebrew seemed much like an ideological attempt at restoring unity amongst a single people with multiple languages, be it Yiddish, Aramaic, Ladino, Mizrahi Hebrew, or any

number of local languages and dialects used by individual communities in the

Diasporas (Nahir, 1998, 341-42). In the original story of the Tower, God disperses

both the people throughout the earth and the languages with the people, like a

metaphor for the eventual fate of the Jewish people who were also destined to live

in extended Exile according to the Torah mythology. Yet as a result of the

deconstruction of the universal language, translation of the original and many new

languages becomes necessary and impossible.

While there is a visible break in understanding of signs and signifiers across

languages, the desire for Hebrew to be reborn could be viewed as a way to

reconnect all Jews in the Diaspora to the homeland, in essence, making the (re)birth

of Israel something of a metaphorical attempt at rebuilding the tower and the city of

God, a quest for a universal sign and signifier for a people divided for centuries

without recognizing the impossibility of this universality and its inherent linguistic

imperialism.

Thus we reach a place with Hebrew where the language is, in effect, a

translation of the prior version, used to create a form of cultural unity across the

Jewish communities of the world, while simultaneously acting as the official state

language of Israel, the only country in the world to have that distinction. This

renders the speakers of Hebrew subject to its ideological formulations, as Barthes

(1964, 1967; cf. Eagleton 135-36) would suggest, naturalizing the social reality of

those subject to and by this language. Language is a series of signs; in this case, the

series of signs known as Hebrew is being reproduced to its subjects as natural in the

course of the Jewish culture, a purely political reality. According to this line of

thought, propagated by Eagleton, "Ideology seeks to convert culture into nature," (135), making the (re)birth of Hebrew appear as natural to the community it was aimed at as the birth of a child or the birth of a nation.

Derrida makes reference to language as a tool of ideology. This appears to make a case in support of the line of thought in which the ideology found in the classrooms across the North American Jewish Diaspora reinforces Israeli values through the teaching of the language not as a cultural referent, but rather a political one. This view is most succinctly demonstrated by Derrida in his essay *Signature Event Context* (1982), where he asserts that "communication vehiculates an ideal content, with language acting as a supplement to the self-perception of this ideal" (314). Once again, the past is absent from the present. Language has the capacity to link history to the present, but there appears to be an absence of historical referencing in the rebirth of Hebrew, an absence that appears to be politically motivated. This is emphasized in the way that Hebrew was (re)born in Israel both prior and post independence, starting with immigrant children in schools.

> What still needs to be explained is what was done to make "a relatively rapid and clean break with prior norms of verbal interaction" (emphasis in original, Fishman 1991:291). Bar-Adon (1977:489) attributed the process to "the children," arguing that "ONLY CHILDREN could ... carry out the ... NATIVIZATION in Modem Hebrew [which] resulted in a NATIVE LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE" (emphasis in original). Bar-Adon further suggests the interesting notion of "mini-generations" of children, some- what like a "school year," with "generations" of siblings and peers partially over- lapping. This notion may help to account for the intensity and speed of the process; yet it fails to explain why the children did not follow the basic behavioral principle referred to above, when they chose to speak a language that would not produce reinforcement in the form of effective communication. In other words, the notion still falls short of explaining why the children would speak Hebrew to their peers and siblings when everybody's native language, including their own, was Yiddish. The following is a schematic framework that attempts to answer these questions. It suggests that the ACTUAL SHIFT to Hebrew in the settlements (from which this language later spread to the rest of the community) involved a process consisting of four consecutive though partially overlapping steps, not necessarily conscious: (1) The children were instilled with desired LANGUAGE ATTITUDES; (2) the children were presented with and acquired the CODE, the He- brew language; (3) the children transferred Hebrew, now a second language, and the attitudes instilled in them OUT OF THE SCHOOLS; and (4) when these children became

adults, their newly born children received and spoke Hebrew as a FIRST LANGUAGE (Nahir, 347, emphasis in original).

This recognizable shift both in terms of language usage in the home and classroom during the developmental stages of the new nation emphasizes the past without a present as well as the presence without a past, enforcing and naturalizing the usage of Hebrew as a spoken and educational language, one with an actual function outside of the literary and liturgical realms which it had been relegated to for so many hundreds of years. The ideology of de-legitimizing Yiddish in the homeland made it appear as the natural, desired language for Jews in the Diaspora; the precedent had been set. This is further emphasized and institutionalized in the Talmud Torah Curriculum Manual (EPSB, 2000, 3) stating, "Language and culture are intensely intertwined. Language is the *primary means* by which cultural information is transmitted; culture influences linguistic form and content."

Given the split between biblical and Modern Hebrew, as well as the versions of Hebrew that existed on the fringes of diasporic life, the past without a present, and conversely the present without a past, there are serious differences in the pronunciation of the language in the Diaspora versus contemporary Israeli speech, yet the written form is remarkably similar. The biblical Hebrew writings were an extension of the oral tradition, yet the Hebrew spoken in the Ashkenazi Diaspora is significantly different than what is used in the spoken form of Modern Hebrew or Biblical Hebrew. The Ashkenazi Hebrew is spoken in a similar way to Yiddish, and bears a much closer resemblance to that language. Given that Yiddish borrowed much from both Hebrew and Slavonic tongues to create unique regional dialects, there was little to no standardization of how Yiddish was managed and taught in the

previous era of stateless diasporic education. Yiddish could be utilized for the sake

of keeping traditions alive, a way for children to understand the basics of the

language their grandparents would use in conversation inside the home, and to

provide a living link to the past, to the memory of the survivors of a great tragedy

and the sacrifices that were made to ensure the new generations of the Diaspora

had this link. Yiddish, in essence, is that past without a present that Derrida (1967,

1982) and Levinas (1987) allude to, and it has been phased out, intentionally or not,

for seemingly political and social reasons expressed in the idea of a Jewish

universalism and unity rooted in the (re)birth of Israel (Nahir, 342).

This represents a shift in the power of language not only as a self-identifier

but also in terms of the influence of institutions and agencies within the Diaspora

itself. I find myself increasingly thinking about experiences within my own

community, where my Rabbi uses Yiddish in the synagogue not for the prayers, but

in concert with English while giving sermons and interacting with those who are

engaged in prayer, seemingly reaching out to older members of the congregation so

that they will understand his spiritual message in a language that is more familiar.

To those who do not understand it, speaking only English and maybe Hebrew, this

integration of a dying language acts as a nostalgic reminder of the old ways that

seem out of sync with the remainder of the community, its interests and its needs in

the present. It is truly a dying language, one that lacks the institutional power or the

organization of Hebrew. Even those that do not speak either Hebrew or Yiddish

understand that Hebrew is the primary Jewish language, while Yiddish is more like a

novelty language, with funny words that seem more at home in a Hollywood film

than inside a prayer hall or around the Passover Seder table.

Is there a purpose to this shift in language, or is it simply a case of World Jewry embarking on a new linguistic trajectory? It appears to be more a combination of the two, almost capturing the rupture in Jewish identification from the stateless to the possession of the state. It acts as a modern unifier beyond a two thousand year old mythological and religious sense of being bound by nothing more than tradition and tragedy. The state of Israel emerged from nothingness, building a link to an un-present past steeped in mythology and emotion, yet the desire to return could not possibly be present in every single Jew, thus creating conditions for politicizing the modern incarnation of the traditional Jewish language. Language studies become a matter of military and political strategy as opposed to an exploration into understanding Hebrew and Jewish history and culture within its own context.

2.5-On Education

In schools in the contemporary Diaspora, it is the Modern, Israeli Hebrew that is the language of instruction, not the Diaspora Hebrew. This is emphasized (at least in the context of the Edmonton Talmud Torah and Calgary Jewish Academy) by the sheer number of Israeli teachers brought in to instruct the language and in the design of the curricula at each institution. The pronunciation has shifted towards the Modern Hebrew as well, focusing on the contemporary alphabet, writing in Hebrew script and even speaking the language with an Israeli accent with an emphasis on pronunciation resembling Sephardic Hebrew, unlike the Ashkenazi sounding Hebrew often associated with Orthodox Jews of the United States. This style of teaching represents that same split in the Diaspora identity, one that centers clearly on Israel rather than on the local Diasporic communities and their own particular regional contexts, and seems to eliminate the need for Diasporic voices. This once again reinforces Barthes' (1964, 1967) notion that ideology's function is to naturalize culture, as the new language continues to kill the old one without any hesitation or resistance from the greater Diaspora community.

If education is a reflection of state power as Michel Foucault (1972, 1975) asserts, then the narratives and ideologies constructed by the Jewish state found in educational materials could potentially be found in the materials created and used abroad. In *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault explores the hospital institution and references the idea of the doctor as sovereign, and as such, the controller of power and knowledge. According to Foucault, "In clinical discourse, the doctor is the direct questioner, the observing eye," (ibid, 52). The doctor has a

multiplicity of roles, therapeutic, pedagogical, and intermediary to the diffusion of medical knowledge and authority of health in a social space (53). Based on his exploration of schools in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), the teacher appears to act in this same capacity, as the sovereign, as the controller of knowledge giving the power of information to his/her students as s/he sees fit, specifically as a controlling agent of what is studied, how knowledge is constructed and contextualized, and also act in these same roles of therapeutic, pedagogic, intermediary, and as a representative of education in a public space.

The influence of both the teacher as a controller of knowledge as well as the impact of the texts that they read cannot be ignored. Schools contain a political anatomy (Foucault, 1975, 138), acting as a disciplinary technology to mold the docile minds and bodies of the students, essentially an administrative and political enclosure masquerading as a therapeutic space (ibid, 141-42). The teacher is effectively a gatekeeper, a bringer of discipline, and responsible for the carrying out of a specific task as well as the initial interpreter of the texts provided for the students to read and use. This is not to suggest that the student is a passive vessel. The students have choice in terms of what narratives they accept and resist, taking in what they see and hear as active participants of an institutional process.

As a Jewish child growing up, I was implicitly socialized to have a certain degree of fear towards anyone of Arabic descent, and until I was older I never understood why. The materials that I had in my Hebrew schools came from Israel or from exclusively Jewish publishing houses in New York, Toronto, Montreal, New Jersey and Boston, with some supplementary materials actually constructed in-

45

house by my Israeli born and educated teachers. The maps of Israel that I had in class included the Palestinian territories, Galilee, and even the Sinai Peninsula as part of Israel, but as a child, I never would have even thought to question if the borders were accurate. I was always taught that Israel was a historically Jewish state, reinforced by the biblical mythos taught as historical tradition, and that Arab Muslims had no true claim to it. I did not know about the motivation behind any of the wars aside from the war of independence in 1948. I simply knew that we needed to defend ourselves or we would be driven into the sea in a massacre on par with the Holocaust, and that we required a homeland to prevent something like that from ever happening again. The Jews had been repressed in such a unique and dehumanizing fashion that as a group, their collective identity could be framed around the Holocaust as the one factor of unity for all Jewish people living in the Diaspora.

> What (North) American Jews do have in common is the knowledge that but for their parents' or (more often) their grandparents' or great-grandparents' immigration, they would have shared the fate of European Jewry…This became the historical foundation for the endlessly repeated but empirically dubious slogan "we are one" (Novick, 1999, 7).

The Holocaust is now the symbol of both unity and uniqueness, of both pride and trauma for the Jewish people. It has become an integral part of the collective diasporic Jewish consciousness, and Israel's security and survival has become the rallying point for the collective hopes of a displaced people.

This rallying cry created the motivation for strong Zionist organizations to exist within the greater Jewish Diaspora. In my school in Edmonton, it was almost entirely absent from the discourses that there was a two thousand year period in which a completely different group of people controlled a land that I grew up

thinking was my second home. I was not truly given the opportunity to understand anything about the displacement of another society for the sake of my own. The way the curriculum in Edmonton is written suggests that there is more going on than I first realized, one that explicitly creates a link between the people and the state, bound not only by the language of instruction, but including the histories taught, and the simple fact that a component of the coursework is learning about contemporary Israeli society. This knowledge is far from essential in terms of the Jewish faith, but Israel the land has such a strong social and emotional bond with Jews outside that it seems an impossibility to separate the culture from the nationality, the religion from the state, and the Israeli identity from the diasporic state of mind.

Given the increased level of secularity and decrease in religious practice found in the Jewish communities of both Israel and the Diaspora, the role of the synagogue as an institution has diminished over time. The synagogue was once the school, the community center, the heart of Jewish life, but this has shifted in the last century, moving away from religiosity within mainstream Jewish life, towards something of a secular community, with secular-like institutions leading the way (Zemel, 2000, 194). This is made particularly poignant in the photography of Alter Kacyzne, who depicted life in the Shtetls of Eastern Europe in the early part of the 20th century, prior to the destruction of this form of Diaspora life by the Holocaust (ibid, 194-97). Yiddish was the central language of instruction, and the school's focus was on the maintenance of the Jewish historical tradition of being "People of the Book" (ibid, 195), learning Torah and traditions of customs and culture.

Figure 1

Scenes such as figure one are no longer the rule, but rather the exception in modern Diaspora life. The synagogue, torah, and the Rabbi/Melamid (teacher in Yiddish) are no longer the epicenters of Jewish life, or Jewish thought.

This brings in the need for an institutionalized system in which power and knowledge can flow, traditions and cultural practices can be taught and passed onto future generations of Jews in the Diaspora. This is precisely where the role of the school and education *as a system* comes into being, bringing in more questions, especially within a diasporic context, involving not only what is taught, but why. This is where the connection to Foucault returns to the forefront, where his connection of institution to power and knowledge can be retooled to examine the nature of education. It must be connected to a state, but in the context of this study, given that my focus is centered on Canadian Jewish Diaspora schools, is it Canada or Israel? It is my belief that Israel most certainly is an actor, supposedly silent in its actual role (Sheffer, 235), but due to the symbolic connection formed in the hearts and minds of the Diaspora populations, a tie to all things Israel has become

naturalized into the Diaspora consciousness.

Foucault (1994b, 127) cites the teacher, like the magistrate and technician, as a competent instance of intellectual capacity, but one that is bound to the service of the state, with the realm of education becoming a "politically ultra-sensitive area" (ibid 127). Power flows through the teacher, the power to form and inform young minds using enlightenment ideals of truth, reason and objectivity while the students are bound by civic and state law to be in class or face a multitude of disciplinary actions from both the institution and their parents. They are subject to the will of the instructors and absorb knowledge from them.

Power relations are twofold in nature according to Foucauldian scholar and disciple Colin Gordon. First, they are "integral to the modern social apparatus and linked to active programs of the social apparatus for the fabricated part of the collective substance of society" (Gordon, cf. Foucault, 1994b, xix). What this appears to mean is that power is everywhere, it is an essential part of every social mechanism and apparatus, and the core of society. This means collective structures and societal mechanisms such as institutions are all capable of holding, forming and maintaining power relations in modern society. Foucault primarily associates power with the state as the ultimate institution, with hospitals, the military and the police and prisons as the primary institutions he examines. Secondly, subjectivity is constituted through power relations. Power does not limit itself purely to repression but all comprises the intention to teach, to mold and instill forms of self-awareness and identities (ibid, xix-xx). This second idea, even more than the first, is the central plank of the theoretical framework on which I am basing my analysis of

educational institutions and the materials found within them.

When Foucault established something resembling a list of types of social institutions that act as vehicles or conduits of power, he places schools in the same breath as military barracks and prisons. As a space or architecture designed for social control, schools, the people employed by schools and the materials used within schools can all be viewed as vehicles of power, with specific narratives and ideological and social paradigms being established within them and flowing through them. Conversely, he attempts to demonstrate the knowable individual as the individual "who is caught in relations of power, as that creature who is to be trained, corrected, supervised, controlled," (ibid xvi). In relation to education, the student in the classroom is caught in the relations of power, gaining knowledge and training, yet understanding that there is no power without the potential for revolt (ibid, 324), embracing the subjective nature of the power relations; being simultaneously subject to one's own identity and someone else's control (ibid, 331).

One of the forms of power Foucault discusses at great length is the concept of Pastoral Power, the kind of power that a spiritual leader has over his/her congregation. This type of power is dependent on balancing a fine line between caring for the entire community as a whole as well as each individual, and it cannot be carried out without knowing one's subjects deeply, knowing "inside their minds" and implying a "knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it" (ibid, 333). Foucault further reinforces this notion in his assertion that the first regulated system of curricular development, an "educational programme" was initiated by a religious group known as the Brothers of Common Life (Foucault, 1975, 161). This

program was designed to evolve, making the specific exercises and forms of knowledge taught become increasingly more difficult and challenging from month to month and year to year, giving the students the opportunity to grow and develop, with the goal of achieving both perfection and salvation as the aim of the institution, for the good of the community as a whole (ibid, 161-62).

Schools were built and designed in an almost militaristic fashion, with a specific and intentional sort of regimented discipline based on military forms. There was as much emphasis on proper posture, cursive form, grooming, and etiquette as on teaching and learning (ibid, 151-53). Although this tightly regimented kind of school is no longer in fashion in the present context, many of the same principles still apply. The school is still a place of discipline and rigorous training, with regimented divisions for learning specific skills (ibid, 160).

The educational institution itself is a specific block where goal oriented activities, systems of communication and power relations interconnect and establish themselves. The school has a specific architecture and spatial organization, with "meticulous regulations that govern [the] internal life" (1994b, 338) of the school, including the activities, the people, the lessons and materials. There are specific functions, codes and lessons that are established in schools, as well as an intentional system of differentiation of people, based not only on age, but levels of knowledge and achievement, with a hierarchical power structure to establish and enforce this differentiation through reward and punishment.

This differentiation presents the possibility for exclusion, or the creation of an "other" inside of every situation. This differentiation also creates and reinforces

the notion that people tend to recognize who they are and create an identity for themselves based on who or what they aren't. To put it more simply, one can only recognize the self through the recognition of the other. This other is either made into an oppositional discourse or excluded from discursive recognition altogether.

In secular Jewish community schools, students are forced to recognize this differentiation on a number of levels. The ascension of Hebrew as the language of instruction creates a sort of differentiation between the languages of both the host countries as well as the languages historically associated with the Jewish Diasporas. Ashkenazi and Sephardic Diaspora cultures are melded together, with the predominant traditions coming from the Ashkenazi school, *and often with religion and mythology taught as factual history and contemporary Israeli history taught as social studies.* Despite the inclusion of prayers into the Hebrew curriculum at least at the Edmonton Talmud Torah (EPSB, 2000a), the prayer for the State of Israel is included into this daily practice, adding a secular Zionist element to the learning of Jewish culture and religious practice.

What makes the issue of Zionist discourse in education so difficult is the fact that as a people collectively through the time in Diaspora, the Jewish people were themselves relegated to that status of the other. As Said alludes to in his study of Orientalism (1978), until the 20th century, the same image was used to describe both Jew and Arab (Said, 140-43). Yet now, with the rise of secular Zionism as a political force, Jews have moved into the realm of the Occident, the holders of power, while the Arab remains the other, the oriental, and is recognized as such or simply excluded from analysis inside the Jewish classroom. By looking at Israel as

the Jewish state in the Jewish-secular Diaspora classroom, students begin to associate Israel as the homeland, thus adding a secondary level of differentiation to the curriculum reinforcing the community's difference from everyone else. But Judaism/Jewish has a double meaning. Is it a religion or is it a culture? In the classroom it is taught as both but one.

This is itself a problematic notion as Jewish/Israeli values get intermingled, creating another split in identity. Where is the line drawn between a Jewish education and a Zionist education? For example, is the Knesset the Jewish government, the governing body of the Jewish state, or is it merely the Israeli government as voted in by the Israeli population, regardless of religious affiliation, especially given the demographic mixture that makes up this government. In the classroom, looking at Israel as the Jewish state reinforces the inability to examine the question of Palestine, excluding it as a legitimate option from the discourse almost by default. This is one of those moments where an "othering" occurs as a function of institutional power and design. It is implicitly engaged in the Diaspora discourse as part of the negotiation and reconciliation of the duality of Diaspora life. As Foucault states, we indirectly constitute ourselves at the exclusion of others (1994b, 403).

In terms of the shape of the Diaspora identity, especially in light of the recent (2009) outbreak of violence in Gaza, it is hardly surprising to see the vast majority of the Diaspora community has rallied behind Israel, almost blindly defending the actions of the Israeli military as a necessary action in the defense of Judaism itself; any dissent from the rank and file membership of the Diaspora community have

been publicly branded as traitors, self-hating Jews and willfully ignorant of the facts regarding the conflict. The position that if Israel does not defend itself, then the Jewish people will become extinct has long been the rhetoric espoused by the supporters of the military both in the homeland and in the Diaspora. This point of view has extended into the conversational dialogue of average Jews who truly believe that our very existence is at stake every time the conflict heats up, as well as into the realm of political demography and politics.

In a 2004 interview, Israeli Political Geographer Arnon Sopher, the architect behind the disengagement plan, stated that Israel's days were numbered unless more unilateral disengagement were to occur, and that this very disengagement was the only way to ensure Israel's survival, not because of the creation of a quasi-independent Palestine, but rather through the creation of a guaranteed human catastrophe inside Gaza, ensuring that one side just loses the will to keep fighting (Rav, 2009 cf. Bloom 2004). Yet these political realties are lost behind a wall of rhetoric within the communities of the Diaspora and the agencies that empower the communities. To speak out against Israel is to speak out against the Jewish people as a whole, bringing in the socio-psychological link to an increase in perceived anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. The very notion that anti-Zionism is the new anti-Semitism has become commonplace on university campuses, within the canon of contemporary Israeli and Diaspora academic scholarship and within Synagogues and Jewish Centers across North America. Jordan Biernbaum, an MA candidate at York University suggests that

> …although the right of Jewish national self-determination in Palestine was guaranteed (and
> in some cases specifically and particularly) in all of the foundational documents of modern

international law (the Paris Peace Treaties which created the League of Nations and the *Charter of the United Nations*) and international human rights law (the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the two 1966 *International Covenants* on human rights), the right of such national self-determination is often uniquely and particularly denied to Jews. Today, [those] who wished to persist in their hatred of Jews have the socially and politically acceptable outlet of anti-Zionism. Despite anti-Zionism's violation of the basic norms of international law and international human rights its racism in its particular and unique denial of Jewish national self-determination, there is no widespread social stigma attached to proclaiming one's anti-Zionism. Like anti-Semitism of the late 19th century, anti-Zionists of the late 20th and early 21st century wear the designation with pride. Like medieval Jew-hatred, numerous anti-Zionists are themselves Jews who have "converted" to anti-Zionism and denounce the (probable) majority of Jews who continue in their belief in the right of Jewish national self-determination (Biernbaum, 2008).

This position only goes to reinforce the ideological and political nature of Zionist discourse, especially within the Diaspora as a method of justification for Israeli policy and action as the supposed universally accepted voice of world Jewry, which is simply not the case (Pappe, 2009; Baram, 2009; http://www.jewsagainstzionism.com/news/currentarticle.cfm?id=156).

Chapter 3-Analysis

3.1-Context

So what does this all mean in the context of Diaspora education? Why are curriculums designed the way they are? Hebrew language instruction acts as a vehicle for the State of Israel's influence upon the Diaspora as a whole, a reflection of the power of the state, like Foucault (1972, 1975) suggests. The influence of Israel upon Diaspora communities is strong and established by the institutions that exist for the maintenance of the communities themselves. How else can the role of textbooks designed specifically to promote Israeli nationalistic values be explained? And it is not just in a single series of books, either. This is an issue present across institutions within the Diaspora, and across time. Some of the books I was educated with are still being used today, some 15-20 years later at the Edmonton Talmud Torah. In Calgary, several different series of textbooks are utilized, but contain similar messages, images and discourses throughout them all. A connection exists, and it is not limited to the teaching of Jewish religious customs, mythology, history and beliefs. This connection extends into personal discourses, perceptions of current and past events, even the way the Israel/Palestine crisis is framed and reframed. It all begins with education.

Like many other institutions, the Education system of the west has roots in the enlightenment, with an intentional push towards discipline, rationality and scientific reasoning at the heart of every curriculum. As an institution of social organization and control, many relations and technologies of power are found in schools, from the relationships between students and teachers, found primarily in

the systems of grading and in terms of the ability to discipline students based on behavior and performance, to the structural hierarchy that the staff is organized through from the principal to the teachers to the support staff; the interaction between teachers and parents, administration and PTA type organizations exert their own power dynamics, while there also exists the relationship between each school and whatever local or regional authority the school is bound to. This regional authority is often in direct control of what is taught, controls the distribution of financial support for each school within its region. The school boards tend to also contain local elected officials acting as trustees to ensure that the community has an opportunity to monitor the activities of the school boards, while also providing for and ensuring that teachers themselves are given the opportunity for professional development and growth-educating the educators.

The level of institutionalization within the education system in Canada goes a step further, as each localized regional board is subject to the provincial government's regulation and supervision. The province ultimately funds each school board, sets the curriculum in each province and the standards for grading of the students. As such, it is clear that there is a certain amount of politicization within the Canadian education system. It is as much an institution of social control as the military, the police, and the healthcare system, yet it is generally perceived to be far more benign in terms of its impact on social and cultural development.

Yet in the case of schools like the Edmonton Talmud Torah and the Calgary Jewish Academy (referred to from this point on as TT and CJA respectively), the curricula are not as regulated by all of these institutional bodies. Certainly the TT, as

a member of the Edmonton Public system and the CJA as a member of the Calgary

Catholic School Board, have to comply with the curricular standards of the province,

but only for those components taught in English, like Math, Science, Canadian Social

Studies, Art and Gym. The Hebrew component, which is given approximately 35-

45% of instruction time depending on the grade level, is somewhat arbitrary. The

schools have their own standards, making use of the many different series of

textbooks available in North America and integrate materials made in house to

supplement any text that may not cover enough on specific topics. The dominant

program used at TT was a series called "Tal Sela." Some of "Tal Sela" books are more

than 25 years old, contain dated images and narratives, and yet they are still used in

the classroom today. Until 2008, the CJA used a series known as "Tal Am."

Interestingly enough, "Tal Am" is being integrated into the curriculum at TT as it is

being phased out at the CJA. These primary sources are supplemented by a variety

of different materials at any given year and in any given grade level. It seems to be

almost entirely based upon a teacher's preference. In the case of TT, many of the

books that I was given access to were actually designed in house through financing

from the public school board, including several compiled by some of my own

teachers.

3.2-Image/Text

The power of text and image on the mind is something that has been debated within academic, artistic and psychological circles to name a few for quite some time. Perspectives on this power range quite a bit, but the one thing that remains clear is that imagery and text do have the capacity to shape and change the points of view of the individuals. Textbooks are designed with the specific goal of teaching something, imparting a vision or an ideological position on a predetermined range of issues falling within the expectations of a curriculum. The way that students learn clearly differs from one individual student to the next, as different people absorb knowledge and interpret ideas in different ways. The most common style of teaching tends to be reliant upon lecture and reading, but that isn't always the best way, making it nearly impossible to generalize how students learn, let alone the effectiveness of textbooks. However the texts themselves have a function that cannot be denied or ignored. As Homi K. Bhabha asserts, pictures have the power of performing a cultural task, in essence, narrating a nation (Bhabha, 1994, cf. Zemel, 197).

The most problematic of the texts were actually the books I used the most during the course of my studies at the Edmonton Talmud torah. This series, the "Tal Sela" curriculum typically will have one incredibly overt image per text, whether it be a picture of the face of Theodore Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, or the crest of the state of Israel, or the iconic dove with the olive branch in its mouth, all of these images are explicit representations of the Zionist discourse, and they appear somewhat arbitrarily in the textbooks, often entirely out of context from the actual

lessons that the books are attempting to be utilized for. The same could be said about the "Tal Am" series, now more commonly used at the Talmud Torah than the older "Tal Sela" books, and still in use at the CJA. These two series are actually produced by the same publishing house in Montreal, owned by the Bronfman family and known for its strong Zionist organizational ties.

The images appear to be, quite simply, out of place; these images appear out of nowhere, almost haphazardly in books used from Kindergarten to Grade six. By and large, these particular series are questionable to begin with, as their focus appears to be much less about teaching language and culture and certainly more concerned with the state of Israel and its existence, creating the conditions where the children exposed to these series of textbooks are socialized to see little to no distinction between Israel as a nation-state and its link to Judaism. Beyond the fact that this imagery appears at all is the way that it does appear, occurring with little to no warning and often in very subtle ways. The example of the dove with the olive branch, a classic Israeli and Jewish iconographic image, appears as a logo on the t-shirt of an illustrated child in a book with the goal of teaching about the traditional observance of the Sabbath day. In fig. 2, Herzl's head is in the corner of the page, entirely out of the context of the lesson itself.

By and large, there is a linguistic lesson found inside of every page, whether it is teaching how to read, differentiate gender singular or plural, or any number of other kinds of lessons; something other than just the intended subject of the lesson is at play in images such as this one. The student becomes the object and subject just

as much as the text, expanding upon the role of educational institutions as a facilitator of the messages of the state.

י"ז.   לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁמוֹת

קְרָא אֶת הַשִּׁיר בְּעַמּוּד 25 וַעֲנֵה עַל הַשְּׁאֵלוֹת הַבָּאוֹת:

1. כַּמָּה שֵׁמוֹת יֵשׁ לְכָל אִישׁ?

2. הַעְתֵּק מֵהַשִּׁיר אֶת הַשּׁוּרוֹת שֶׁכָּתוּב בָּהֶן עַל שֵׁמוֹת שֶׁכָּל אִישׁ מְקַבֵּל מֵהַהוֹרִים שֶׁלּוֹ.

3. הַעְתֵּק מֵהַשִּׁיר אֶת הַשּׁוּרוֹת שֶׁכָּתוּב בָּהֶן עַל שֵׁם שֶׁאִישׁ מְקַבֵּל מֵהַסְּבִיבָה שֶׁלּוֹ.

4. הַעְתֵּק מֵהַשִּׁיר אֶת הַשּׁוּרוֹת שֶׁכָּתוּב בָּהֶן עַל שֵׁם שֶׁכָּל אִישׁ מְקַבֵּל מֵהַחֲגִיגוֹת שֶׁהוּא חוֹגֵג בַּחַיִּים שֶׁלּוֹ.

5. הַעְתֵּק מֵהַשִּׁיר אֶת הַשּׁוּרוֹת שֶׁכָּתוּב בָּהֶן עַל שֵׁם שֶׁכָּל אִישׁ מְקַבֵּל בִּגְלַל הַמַּרְאֶה שֶׁלּוֹ.

6. הַעְתֵּק מֵהַשִּׁיר שׁוּרוֹת שֶׁכָּתוּב בָּהֶן עַל שֵׁמוֹת שֶׁכָּל אִישׁ מְקַבֵּל מֵאֲנָשִׁים שׁוֹנִים.

Figure 2

One of the most critical narratives present in many of the texts is the narrative of exclusion and absence. Throughout many of the textbooks, especially those designed to teach and celebrate Israeli Independence day, there is an absence of Palestinian narratives, an intentional exclusion from the design of the books and the courses themselves. This absence could be viewed as an intentional negation of the Palestinian cause so as to avoid discussion of the Palestinian question from the students at a young age.

3.3-Alterity vs. Ownership

As Jews carry an identity of the other, and have been socialized to accept this other, it places the idea of self/other debate into the forefront of the classroom. We are defined by our distinctiveness, yet we create conditions that negate the validity of another other found within our midst. Images of Jerusalem, with captions reading "our city" in Hebrew contain the Dome of the Rock, one of the holiest icons and places within Islam, framed in the context of a city as an exclusively Jewish place.

Figure 3

Figure three is a demonstration of the narrative of absence, of exclusion and negation of one group to reinforce the dominance of the other. It is also an example of Levinas' notion of Alterity, the belief that a sense of self can "only be sustained via a prior engagement with the other" (Levinas 1990, cf. Mirzoeff, 2000, 64). Given that the defining moment of Alterity comes from the visual, this image clearly demonstrates the moment when the passive observer becomes a witness (ibid, 64).

The page, taken from a Tal Am text designed to teach about Israeli Independence Day, has real photographs of the city of Jerusalem being held by illustrated children. The specific lesson, designed to teach how to spell Jerusalem in Hebrew as well as several other words also contains captions (translated literally from Hebrew) stating, "Jerusalem is *my* city" and "Jerusalem is the Holy city."

The photos are iconic images of the Old City, featuring the western Wall, the holiest Jewish religious place juxtaposed with the Dome of the Rock, one of the holiest sites in Islam. That they are within such close proximity to one another is not the point; the message is clear in its negation of the relevance of the Dome through the message of ownership of Jerusalem. This statement to students disregards the 60 years of controversy surrounding control of the Holy city, an area of dispute since the formation of Israel and a major sticking point in the prevention of making peace a reality. As is commonly known, both the Israelis and Palestinians claim the right to control the city, often using these major religious sites and mythological history to support their claims. By asserting a position of ownership of the city to diasporic students, there is a clear intent to reinforce the position of the Israeli government, maintaining that the capital of Israel is Jerusalem, negating the Palestinian position in the process.

3.4-Independence Day
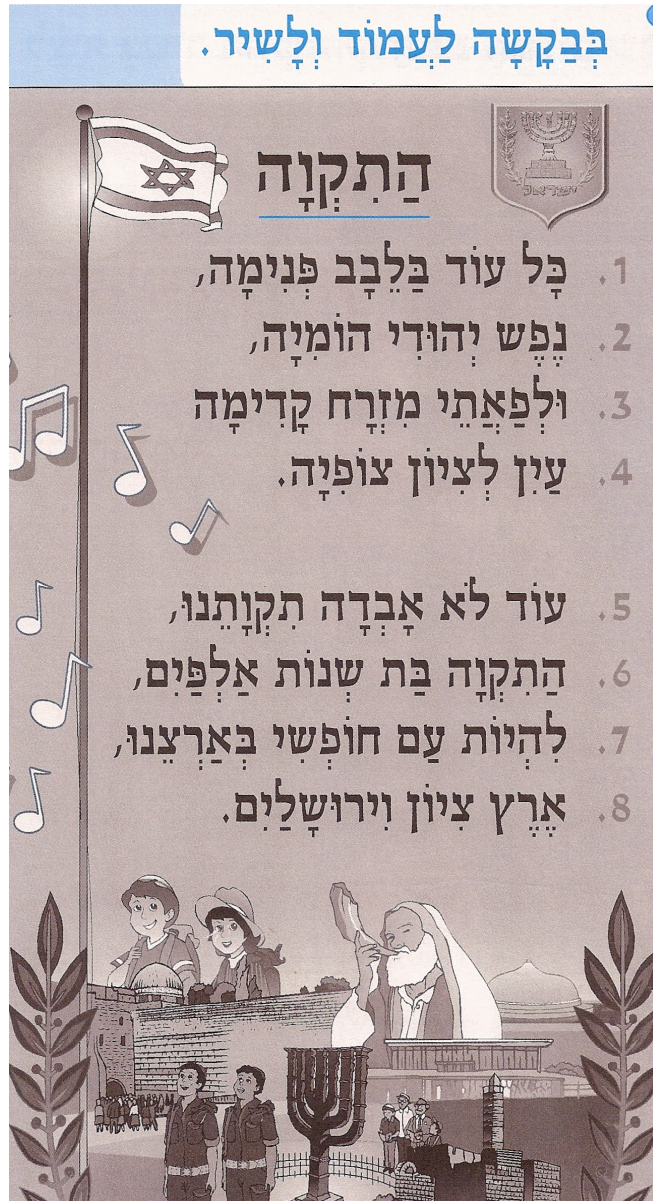
Figure 4

Figure four is from the same textbook, designed to celebrate Israeli Independence day. The words on the page are of Israel's national anthem, "Hatikvah." Despite the implications towards the issue of dual loyalties between the host country and the homeland, the reason for teaching the national anthem is rather obvious. However, it is the imagery used to highlight the Zionist discourses that are of note in this example. In the background is the emblem and flag of Israel

as well as other long-established Judaic iconography such as the Menorah and the image of the Rabbi blowing the Shofar, a long established religious ritual. The foreground, however, contains more interesting and pressing imagery, specifically the two IDF soldiers standing at attention as well as the (presumably Jewish) children in behind the Dome of the Rock.

Compounding the previous issues surrounding ownership is the division of loyalties created through engaging in an exercise based on nationalism as religion, using religious iconography and traditions of the past to invoke a sense of responsibility and ownership over the land in the present. This notion solidifies the concrete link to Levinas' conception of a past without a present, and conversely a present without a past, as well as continuing the link with the notion of Alterity. It is through the blending of mythical symbols into modern life that this split between past and present is realized in this image, sending a message of linearity, continuity and oneness that does not actually exist. Israel's (re)creation is characterized by a sudden emergence, but is dependent on this mythology for its existence. It is through the mythology that the emotional ties are created and embedded into the consciousness of the communities (Nancy, 42). Images such as this, surrounding the national anthem of the state, create these first links for children to recognize this sense of oneness and unity created by the state and the feeling of entitlement that comes along with it.

בְּבַקָשָׁה לְצַיֵּר (עִיגוּל) סָבִיב לַסֵמֶל שֶׁל מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל.
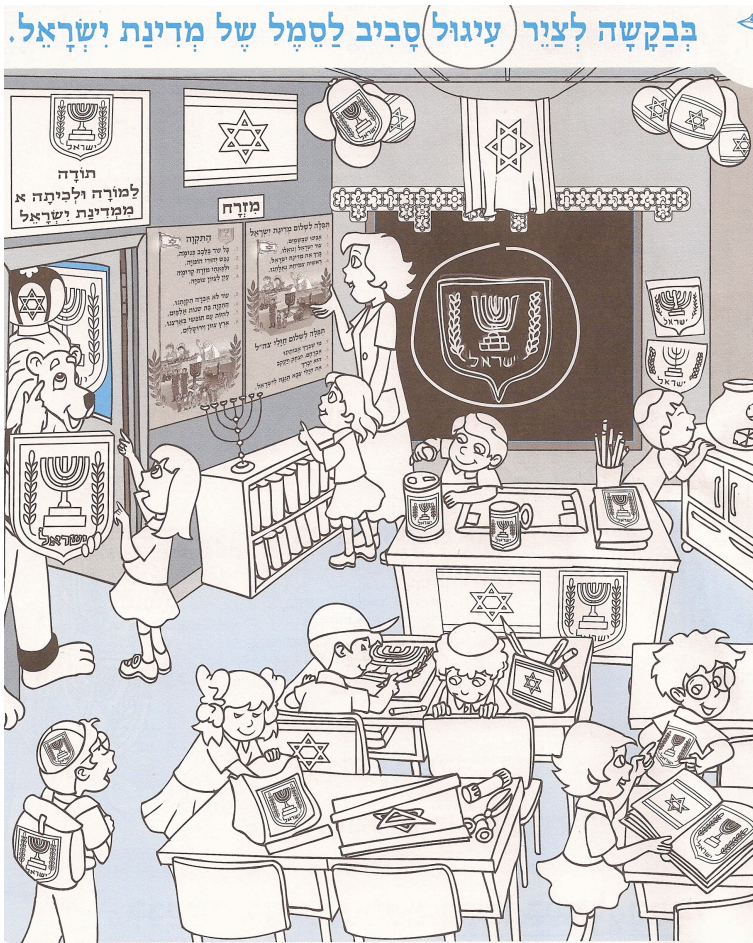
Figure 5

Figure five is another from the Tal Am series, depicting a classroom setting with students engaged in a lesson. The exercise calls for the students to circle the crest of the state of Israel, so as to be able to identify this national icon. This textbook is designed for early primary education, likely grade 1 or 2. This kind of explicit socialization is neither limited to the Tal Am series as a whole, nor to its series of books specifically designed for studying Israeli Independence Day. Tal Sela as well has a number of textbooks devoted to the subject of Israeli Independence, containing remarkably similar imagery and narratives.

קְרָא וּשְׁמַע סִפּוּר בַּסִפְרִיָה

קְרָא בְּסִפְרִיָה אֶת הַסְפָרִים הַבָּאִים וְהַקְשֵׁב לַקַלֶטֶת:

עַל כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים

מְדִינָה וְהַמְדִינָה

חֲלוֹם הֶרְצֵל

אַבָּא שֶׁלִי בְּמִלוּאִים

כְּשֶׁאֶהְיֶה גָדוֹל...

Figure 6

     This picture is taken from the back cover of a Tal Sela book. Loosely translated, the title of the book is "Bring us Song" and is designed to promote Israeli Independence Day by telling several stories of the struggle to bring about the creation of the Jewish State. All of the other books in this series tend to have a Zionist slant in their construction; however the one book I wish to bring the most attention to is on the bottom left and also being held by the illustrated child. The title of this book translates to "My Father is in the Israeli Defense Force." The suggestion painted by this title and corresponding image is clear; that being in the Army is a normal part of Israeli life, that the struggle and conflict is normal and acceptable behavior and all children are expected to understand this. This narrative normalizing the IDF and the conflict is a common part of the educational process for Israeli Independence festivities at the Talmud Torah and the Calgary Jewish Academy.

During my time as a student at TT, Israeli Independence Day was treated as an incredible celebration; the school effectively shut down for the day while the older students and the staff put on a carnival-like event for the day, with the hope of demonstrating what life in Israel was really like for the younger children. The students would go from event to event throughout the day, and inevitably there was always a station involving teachers or older students dressed in IDF attire and pretending to be IDF soldiers. This station involved putting the students through some form of rigorous disciplinary exercise to simulate basic training, once again affirming Foucault's link between the military and Education (Foucault, 1975). This kind of an event was also common at the Jewish summer camp I attended for most of my youth during the "Maccabiah" mini-Olympics held at the end of each session, where there was always an event that had an IDF-related theme and featured counselors acting as IDF soldiers.

This kind of event also reinforces the link to Barthes' (1964, 1967) notion that the function of ideology is to make culture appear as natural. The naturalization and normalization of being in a perpetual state of conflict completely shapes the way children associate themselves in relation to the conflict, and the recognition of the self through the negation of the other. The title of the book where this image comes from is "Bring Us Song," invoking a sense of joy and happiness, of jubilation. Why else would the entire school shut down for the day in order to celebrate the most important event in contemporary Jewish/Israeli history? This amount of joy acts as one part of the binary relationship that exists between Jews at home and abroad and the Palestinian people. For every song of joy written to celebrate the

creation of the state of Israel, there is another tale, one of sorrow and defeat for the Palestinian. Yet these discourses of sadness and defeat are entirely absent from the texts. There is a story written in "Bring Us Song" to describe the process of the (re)creation. This narrative barely mentions the Palestinians and the role of the Ottoman Empire prior to WWI. Instead, the story and corresponding images paint a timeline beginning with a post WWII Britain as the overseers of "Mandate" Palestine in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Featured prominently in this story is the inital *British* resistance to the idea of Israel and the eventual takeover of the land from British hands. This process actually took decades of negotiations, beginning first with the settlement movement pre WWI, when the Ottoman Empire controlled what was then Palestine, and eventually through the imperial powers of Western Europe, specifically Great Britain. It is easy to understand the desire to shelter younger children from the bloody history of the conflicts, yet it seems that in a textbook telling the story of Israeli Independence, even to children in grades 1-3, there should be more of an effort to tell the whole story, not just the part that glorifies the Jewish people's quest for their homeland's revival and the shift from Palestine as a Colonial Mandate to a post-Colonial nation-state.

In an earlier section, I discussed the institutionalization of biblical mythology as genuine Jewish history. This is one of the books that reinforces this notion, as demonstrated in the following two images:

ד׳. עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל

א. קְרָא כָּל קֶטַע וְסַמֵּן √ בַּמָּקוֹם הַמַּתְאִים.
ב. הַשְׁלֵם אֶת קַו־הַזְּמַן שֶׁל עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַמּוּד ב׳ בַּמַּעֲטָפָה.

1. בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
ה׳ אָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ
לָלֶכֶת לָגוּר בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
הָאָבוֹת—אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
חָיוּ¹ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

2. יַעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יוֹרְדִים לְמִצְרַיִם
יַעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ לְמִצְרַיִם
כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה רָעָב² בָּאָרֶץ.
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חָיוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם.
הֵם הָיוּ עֲבָדִים לְפַרְעֹה הַרְבֵּה שָׁנִים.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

3. מֹשֶׁה מוֹצִיא אֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם
ה׳ שָׁלַח אֶת מֹשֶׁה
לְהוֹצִיא אֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם.
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יָצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם
וְעָלוּ לְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
הֵם חָיוּ בָּאָרֶץ הַרְבֵּה שָׁנִים
וּבָנוּ בָּהּ בֵּית־מִקְדָּשׁ.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

4. הַבַּבְלִים בָּאָרֶץ
הַבַּבְלִים³, אוֹיְבִים⁴ שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
נִלְחֲמוּ בְּעַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
הֵם שָׂרְפוּ⁵ אֶת בֵּית־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ,
הוֹצִיאוּ אֶת הָעָם מֵאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְהֵבִיאוּ אוֹתָם לְבָבֶל.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

5. שָׂרְפוּ —burned   3. בַּבְלִים —Babylonians   1. חָיוּ —lived
4. אוֹיְבִים —enemies   2. רָעָב —hunger

Fig. 7   10

11

5. עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל חוֹזֵר לָאָרֶץ
אַחֲרֵי שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה
חָזַר עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל לָאָרֶץ.
הָעָם בָּנָה בָּתִּים חֲדָשִׁים
וְגַם בֵּית־מִקְדָּשׁ שֵׁנִי.
___ עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חַי בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

6. הָרוֹמָאִים
שׁוּב בָּאוּ אוֹיְבִים¹ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
הָרוֹמָאִים נִלְחֲמוּ בָּעָם.
הֵם שָׂרְפוּ² אֶת בֵּית־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי
וְהוֹצִיאוּ אֶת עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הָאָרֶץ.
הָעָם הָיָה הַרְבֵּה שָׁנִים מִחוּץ³ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.
עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל רָצָה כָּל הַזְּמַן לַחֲזוֹר לְאַרְצוֹ.
___ עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חַי בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

7. הַיְּהוּדִים עוֹלִים לְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל
אַחֲרֵי הַרְבֵּה־הַרְבֵּה שָׁנִים,
הִתְחִילוּ יְהוּדִים לַחֲזוֹר לְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
בַּהַתְחָלָה עָלוּ מְעַטִּים,
אַחַר־כָּךְ בָּאוּ הַרְבֵּה יְהוּדִים לְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
הֵם בָּנוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְקָמָה הַמְּדִינָה הַחֲדָשָׁה שֶׁל הָעָם הַיְּהוּדִי.
___ עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא חַי בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

8. בִּמְדִינַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם
עַכְשָׁו, הַרְבֵּה יְהוּדִים חַיִּים בִּמְדִינַת־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְהַרְבֵּה יְהוּדִים עֲדַיִן⁴ לֹא חַיִּים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.
אֲבָל, כָּל יְהוּדִי יוֹדֵעַ,
שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ מָקוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ הַרְבֵּה יְהוּדִים חַיִּים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.
___ מְעַט יְהוּדִים חַיִּים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.

ג. קְרָא אֶת הַקְּטָעִים וֶאֱמֹר: מָה אַתָּה לוֹמֵד מֵהֶם עַל חַיֵּי עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל?

1. אוֹיְבִים —enemies   2. שָׂרְפוּ —burned   3. מִחוּץ —outside   4. עֲדַיִן —yet

Fig. 8

This is the story of the state of Israel's historical evolution over time. The first image is of the forefathers of the Jewish people, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The next is of the exile to Egypt and the start of the first Diaspora (Sheffer, 43-47, Scharfstein, 1994, 70-75). The next image is of Moses leading the Jews back to Israel, claiming a return to our lands. The fourth is of the Babylonian armies destroying the original holy temple, the fifth an image of the rebuilding and reclamation post Babylon, the sixth of the Roman conquest and removal of holy Jewish artifacts, the seventh of the modern Zionist resettlement project, and the final image represents the modern Jewish state as it is today. The exercise is designed to identify whether or not the Jews lived in Israel during the times described. This is institutionalizing mythology as history directly inside of textbooks, creating conditions for the sense of entitlement surrounding Israel and reinforced in other lessons with the idea that "Jerusalem is my city." What the blending of mythology and history does not do,

especially in this exercise, is address the gap of control between the Roman

conquest and the birth of modern Zionism, relegating the entire history of the

Diaspora and the absence of a dominant Jewish presence in Palestine to the

sidelines.

The Zionist influence permeates the illustrations, even while the lessons appear to be designed almost exclusively for the purpose of teaching the basics of reading and writing the Hebrew language. A Tal Am lesson designed for an upper level student, grade 4 or 5, designed for teaching Modern Hebrew script, (a cursive form that never existed prior to the (re)creation of the state of Israel), still contains these subtle messages. The following two images are of two pages found side by side to demonstrate the cursive form of two letters. The first page, figure ten, (on the right, as Hebrew is written right to left) demonstrates shape and form of letters, with a series of exercises designed to teach and reinforce the linguistic pattern of the newly (re)created language. The second page, fig. nine, an extension of the lesson uses the above images to further develop the cursive skills in the students, while reinforcing images of Israeli nationalism such as the flag, placed three times on the page, as well as a map of Israel with no discernable rendering of the borders and disputed zones found in the Israeli state. Similar to Israel's Political reality, the map is placed in the context of a board game, with potential for clear winners and losers. Without illustrating the disputed zones, the game paints a clear picture as to who the losers are in the real world.
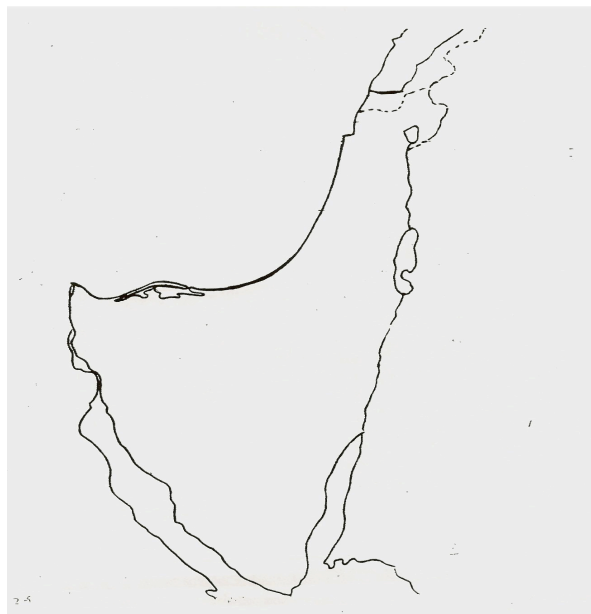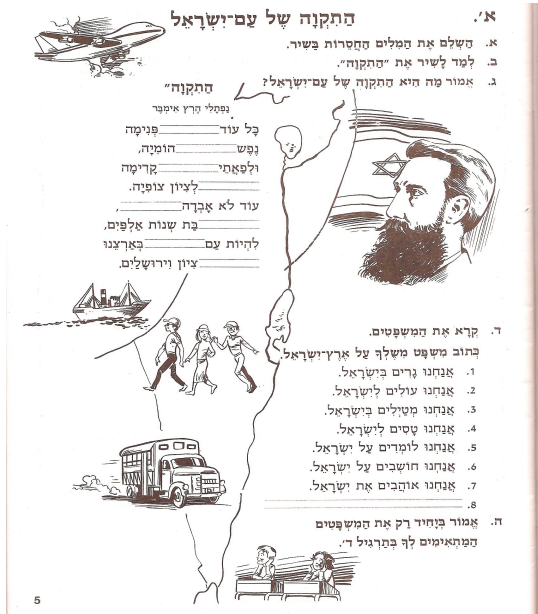
Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

The relationship between maps and identity is an important one. Many of the sources have almost no recognition of disputed zones and borders in place, some being incredibly out of date despite how new the sources were compiled. The image on the right comes from a Tal Am book, while the image on the left comes from a Grade Nine course-pack made at the TT in 2003. Figure 11 was the image that I grew up thinking was the proper map of Israel, containing all of Sinai and certainly not sectioning off Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) or the Gaza Strip. This map was also found in full color, with topography, hanging in nearly every Hebrew classroom while I attended Talmud Torah. For the sake of argument, it could have been that the TT did not have the funds to replace these full-scale maps by the time I began at the TT in 1986, four years after returning Sinai to Egypt, but they remained nonetheless. I am not entirely certain when I was made aware of the changes to the map, but I do remember insisting that this map to the left was the proper border of Israel for some time.

Despite my ignorance, there was little way of knowing that there were disputed zones based on the materials I had access to as a student, especially of the disputed northern territory known as the Golan Heights, containing the Sea of Galilee, sometimes known as Lake Kinneret. It is Israel's only source of fresh water and also a major point of contention between Israel and Syria since the 1967 war (Scharfstein, 62, 63). Despite the controversy surrounding Golan, even on the few maps that do demonstrate disputed zones, the Golan Heights region is not sectioned off as an area of controversy.

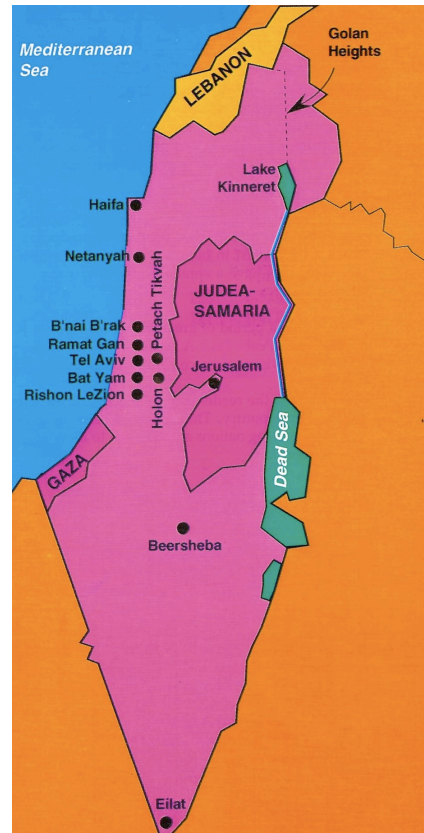Fig. 13 (left)   Fig. 14 (right)

Contained in one of the in-house made texts from the Talmud Torah, there is

a detailed timeline of events charting out the first one hundred years of Zionism, as

well as the first fifty years of Israel. This timeline comes complete with several

detailed maps of the region and charts how these maps have shifted over time,

reinforcing the importance of maps in terms of understanding the transformations

of the state and how maps can impact self and collective identification. The borders

of Israel have changed significantly from one decade to the next, not to mention the

controversy surrounding the security fence that snakes through territories

irrespective of the established green line boundaries (Essawi and Ardell, 2006, 32;

Morris, 2006, 26 cf. Sheps 2007). The constant shifting of boundaries and control

over specific regions makes complete accuracy difficult to maintain. The borders

between the internationally recognized state and the controversial West Bank and Gaza occupied territories could potentially be made more clear to the students from the start than many of the materials used would indicate, especially those sources made in-house, where opportunities to utilize up to the minute materials would not be too difficult to access.

Figure 15   Figure 16

Maps appear in many of the different resources, but seem especially prevalent in the books geared towards younger students, appearing in many different situations not limited to the textbooks regarding Israeli Independence day. The aim of these books is to teach the basics of the Hebrew language, Jewish culture and customs and history, justifying their presence in the name of teaching about landmarks in Israel as a necessary component of learning about Jewish life, linking the language to the discourses of the state by doing so.

3.6-Zionsim, the State and Mythology

In figure 17 there is a reference to the notion of Hebrew as a "living language" in the image (found on pg. 67), taken from the back cover of a secondary source used at the Calgary Jewish Academy for grade 1 students, stating the goals and aims of the book to be an exploration of the world of Hebrew through learning Jewish holidays. This presents the notion of the Hebrew (re)creation as the language of the Jewish people, as well as its direct link to Israel as the language of the (re)created state. The use of the map serves as a reinforcement of this link, instantly politicizing the course materials for young children towards a one-sided understanding of Israel as a state and fostering the emotional and psychological tie to the Jewish people at a very early age.
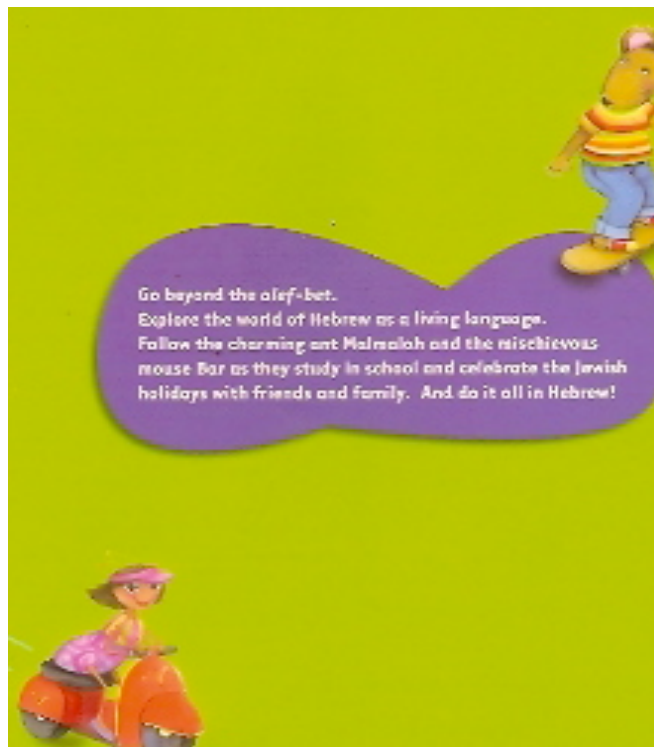

Figure 17

The textbooks geared towards the younger students contain a specific discourse of identity through the establishment of multicultural and pluralistic

values vis-à-vis Israel. The notion of pluralism and multiculturalism comes from Israel's post 1967 transformation into more of a Western-style multicultural democratic nation-state, with freedom of religion, freedom of speech and an apparent commitment to social justice and human rights enshrined within Israel's legal code and constitutional design. Israel has free elections and a representative democracy that is inclusive of minority groups including Arab Israelis, Druze, Christians and Bedouin citizens of Israel, regardless of the umbrella policy of Israel being a Jewish State. This is also demonstrated through Israel's political and diplomatic ties with Western nations, particularly the United States, Canada and Great Britain. The image of the Israeli flag is common in texts across publishers and series, indicating a desire to enforce the importance of knowing the symbol of the Jewish state. However, it appears as though newer book series are taking this in a different direction in terms of how to frame identity construction. Consider the images on the following page:

Fig. 18   Fig 19

Figure 18 is an image from the Tal Sela series, while on the right, an image from the newest series of books to be launched at the CJA, titled "Friends in Hebrew" beginning in fall 2010. The type of exercise is nearly identical, identifying the flags of various countries, essentially a world geography lesson in Hebrew. The Tal Sela book calls for an identification specifically of the Israeli flag, while the new series calls for the recognition of various countries, a far more effective method of encouraging multiculturalism as well as teaching the Hebrew language as a language global in scope. In both cases, however, the emphasis lies on placing one's national identity at the heart of the image, creating conditions of Jewish self-identification through Israeli nationalistic iconography rather than through symbols equated with being Jewish.

The Talmud Torah in particular has several texts made in house that by and large support the doctrine of Zionism and Zionist values. Many of these internally made books are used for the Junior High program and delve into a much more

detailed analysis of the Israeli state and its development over the course of the last 61 years, relying on essays and discursive readings of the role of the state in contemporary Jewish life. By and large, these in-house texts are collections of essays written by various Jewish scholars and come from a number of different sources including UN treaty documents, essays from the Jewish Student Online Research Center (JSOURCE), materials lifted from the department for Jewish Zionist Education of the Jewish Agency for Israel (http://www.jafi.org.il/education/100/TIME/Index.html) and chapters from un-credited books and magazines. This increased dependence on materials with the specific aim of promoting the Israeli state's ideological position creates conditions for students to have very little in the way of active discussion or dialogue surrounding the nature of the conflict and the position of the Palestinian people vis-à-vis Israel. It also serves to reinforce both Foucault's (1975) link between education and the state as well as Barthes' (1964, 1967) definition of ideology as the method of making culture appear as natural.

The bulk of these texts tend to be shaped by various writers' and scholars' takes on the wars fought to create and defend Israel. In the 2003-04 Grade 9 Hebrew Social studies manual, there are no less than eight different essays or articles written on the major conflicts fought between 1948-73, as well as an article on the 1981 Iraq campaign and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. There are also several articles discussing the original UN treaties, the significance of maps and territories annexed through military victory and even an extended article that is intentionally placed twice inside a course-pack discussing the role of Jerusalem in the conflict, in

which a rather shocking conclusion is drawn. According to this article, the Jewish

claim to the disputed Holy city is of far greater legitimacy than that of the Islamic

claim:

> Moslems [sic] also make a religious claim to Jerusalem, but their claim does not have the same spiritual intensity and *solid historical basis as the Jewish claim...* Jerusalem played no role in the early history of Islam. It has special meaning for Moslems only because of its importance in Judaism. The early teachers of Islam accepted the Jewish belief that Jerusalem was holy and *they wanted to take over its holy status for themselves...* In modern times, though, the Arabs have tried to convince the world that they have a special right to Jerusalem... Anyone who is familiar with Islam knows that this claim is just *an attempt by the Arabs to gain by propaganda what they cannot claim in the war* (TT, 2003b, 6; 2001, 8, emphasis added).[7]

This article continues in a similar vein, painting the problem of Palestinian refugees

as a factor caused entirely by their "Arab brethren" (ibid, 8), claiming Israel's role in

the creation of the refugee problem not only as pro-Arab propaganda, but citing the

expulsion of Jews from Arab lands as justification for expelling Palestinians from the

new Jewish state. This article also avoids delving into any of the socioeconomic

factors that would have certainly had an effect on the massive, two-way population

transfer upon the defeat of the Arab league in 1948.

The irony found in this type of writing is the accusation of propaganda from

one side of the conflict while clearly engaging in a propaganda campaign on the

other. For example, the 2001-02 book has a note placed carefully as the final page of

the course pack giving educational suggestions for the teachers, making certain that

the teachers are careful to explain the difference between propaganda and

legitimate research and expecting students at the Grade 9 level to be able to tell the

---

[7]The original author and source of this article is unknown. The producers of this course-pack for Talmud Torah did not provide any bibliographic information for any of the source material for articles they included. This article is found in two places within the 2003-04 manual as well as in the 2001-02 manual.

difference. This is of course after eight previous years of Zionist based discourses being taught in the classrooms. It is small wonder that younger members of the community in Edmonton, based on my observation and discussions, appear so willing to blindly support Israel in all its actions.

Beyond this is the issue of presenting mythology as history. Throughout the last chapter, I demonstrated that examples of Jewish mythology framed as history are presented in many of the textbooks used at both the TT and CJA. By and large, these texts used biblical stories as the history of the Jewish people, including a visual history the completely disregarded the nearly 2000 year gap between the Roman expulsion of the Jews to the birth of the modern state of Israel. This use of mythology as legitimate history is countered in the upper level course-packs at the Talmud Torah. Claiming Islamic mythology as fiction while Jewish mythology as factual historical claims is not only problematic but also deeply hypocritical.

The "solid historical claim" of the Jews is countered by the "legend that Mohammed had been taken up to heaven on the temple mount in Jerusalem" (TT 2003b, 6, 99). This discourse of rejecting anything remotely lending credence to the claims of the Palestinian people has become so completely institutionalized that it is not recognized for what it is, which provides a probable explanation for why this incredibly biased article is included not once but twice in the same course-pack. Jewish students are still exposed to this narrative of accepting Jewish mythology as historical fact while Islamic mythology is constructed as merely a propaganda tool to gain public support.

It is important to note the complete change in tone between the materials used at the Elementary level compared to that of the junior high curricula. In the elementary texts, as demonstrated in the previous section, there is an emphasis on learning the language, while the message of Zionism and its importance is implicitly placed in the visuals, remaining in the background for students to absorb. In the junior high texts, the message of Zionism is brought to the surface, not as a matter to debate, but rather the focal point of the discussion. These materials also feature several different detailed accounts of the origins of the Zionist movement as a political organization, not a religious one, linking the establishment of the state to the Zionist movement as much as to the desire for the Jewish people to have a homeland in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

3.7-Post-Zionism and the Diaspora

But what does this all mean in terms of how it relates to Jewish education in Diaspora? The increased dependency upon both Zionist discourses in materials as well as the role of Israel in Jewish identity is a product of the historical and mythological attachment to Israel, less as a geopolitical entity than that of an emotional homeland and supposed place of refuge. Thus, Israel will always be linked to the Jewish people in any transmission of social and political discourse. The education provided at a Jewish community-based school will almost always have Israel as the major theme of study on the Hebrew side of the curriculum, as it is the language of the Jews spoken in the nation-state of the Jewish people. It is perceived as a cultural movement rather than a question of politics and has been so for decades.

An early Zionist Leader, Ahad Ha'am (born Asher Ginsberg), posited the idea of two different questions relating to the potential for a Jewish state and its implications for the Diaspora. The first question, that of the "Question of the Jews" was far more concerned with safety and security from persecution (Schweid, 228-29). Given that Diaspora Jews are by and large safe in the current configuration of the Western world, moving from a subject position of other and Oriental and into the sphere of the Occidental as Said (1978) posits, the question of the Jews has been answered. Therefore what remains is the "Question of Judaism," in which Ha'am feared that Jewish people would lose their identity in the Diaspora; that matters of faith, religion and tradition could be lost through assimilation, intermarriage and the appeal of western modernity yet encouraged a stronger Diaspora community in

order to deal with the preceding question of the Jews. Yet this very question, one of Judaism has been transmuted into a type of Zionist/Jewish dichotomy where the only way to appear as a good Jew is to be a loyal, faithful Zionist. Ha'am felt that the question of Judaism was both the purpose of Israel and the purpose of Zionism, advocating the notion of creating Israel not necessarily as a Jewish political entity but rather simply a spiritual center.

To a certain extent this loss of identity that Ha'am suggests is present in both Diaspora and within Israel itself; however Schweid posits that Israel is all the more necessary as political entity to deal with the question of Judaism, because an autonomous Jewish culture could not be made possible in the Diaspora. This is where the contradictory notions of both Schweid and political Zionism come to the forefront. It is clear from this perspective that Political Zionism and western Democracy are incapable of reconciling. Furthermore, it is understood that Zionism represents itself as the belief that all Jews have a home in Israel, founded on the principles that Israel acts as the voice of the Jewish people worldwide; yet Israel exists as a representative democratic state in which non-citizens do not control the day-to-day policies of the state. Finally, there is the assumption, enforced in policy, that Zionist ideologies are necessary for the education of Diaspora communities as a function of answering the "question of Judaism" to prevent the loss of the religious and cultural values. This once again brings up the question of mutual exclusivity between Zionism and Judaism.

This type of socialization is taken even further in the methods used to teach older students about politics and the control over controversial territories. Figure

20, a worksheet found in the 2003-04 grade nine course-pack engages the students to consider issues of disengagement, while seeming to suggest the very notion in a negative light.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS pg. 281

Answer the questions:
1. Do you think that Israeli citizens should have the right to live anywhere in the West Bank? _____

_____

2. If not, should the Arabs have the right to live anywhere in Israel? _____

_____

_____

3. What issue has divided the Israel religious community from the political policy of the Labor government? _____

_____

4. What do you think about the Labor government's decision to withdraw IDF from the major Arab cities? How can it help bring peace? How can it increase terrorism? _____

_____

5. Should Israel remove all the settlements and settlers from the West Bank? Would that bring peace or increase terrorism?

_____

6. What do you think about the 400 Israeli settlers living in Hebron, surrounded by 100,000 hostile Arabs? Should the Labor government forcefully remove them? _____
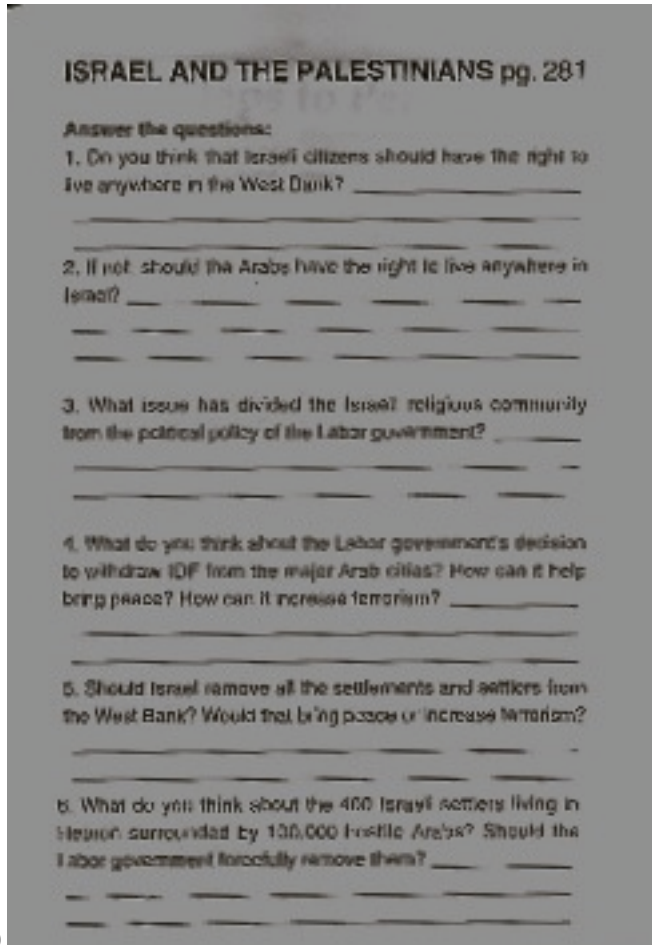
_____

Fig. 20

This exercise frames the question of the controversial settlements in the West Bank in plain sight, asking students as to whether or not Israeli citizens have the right to live anywhere in the West Bank as opposed to the specific territories allotted for Jewish communities. The second question then reframes and reverses the issue of the right to settle anywhere in Israel for "the Arabs," not the Palestinians. Further compounding this issue is the language used to pose the question as a follow up

from the first question, only by taking the negative response of the first question for a condition for answering the second.

The questions read as follows: 1) Do you think that *Israeli Citizens* should have the right to live anywhere in the West Bank? 2) *If not*, should *the Arabs* have the right to live anywhere in Israel? This is a very delicate sort of debate to have at the Grade nine level to begin with, especially given that the questions are obviously directed to promote the belief held by many hard line Zionists that Israelis clearly have the right to settle anywhere, regardless of treaties and established borders. This is only compounded by the fact that the decisions of the more politically moderate Labor Party are being questioned through the exercise.

This worksheet is a particularly provocative example, one that promotes and reinforces a specific ideological discourse among young members of the Diaspora community without really providing a true opportunity to debate the issue of legitimate land claims from either side of the debate. Furthermore, language is being used to subjugate the Palestinian identity by identifying the non-Israeli population as specifically Arab. This discourse is compounded by the fifth and sixth questions of the exercise, which ask whether a withdrawal from both the city of Hebron and the West Bank as a whole would promote peace or increase terrorist activity from the Arab population. The sixth question specifically paints the "Arab" population of Hebron as "hostile" to the 400 Jewish settlers that live in the area. This is an intensely political issue to begin with, one that is very sensitive to those who live in the areas in question on both sides, many of whom identify as Palestinians, not necessarily as either an Arab or a terrorist.

One of the more telling documents is the Curriculum Manual for Teachers (EPSB, 2000a, 2000b) from the Edmonton Talmud Torah. This manual is a heavily detailed series of documents outlining the design and implementation of the complete Judaic Studies curriculum for every grade level, including the hypothetical senior high curriculum never actually put into place. On the surface, the manual appears to take cues from other similar manuals designed for second language instruction from all over western Canada, working in the need to factor in aspects of the regular public school curriculum, yet a closer read yielded a drastically different approach, factoring heavily into discourses of power, the ideological nature of language and the integration of Israeli studies into the Judaic curriculum as a matter of policy, often integrating Israeli studies and Jewish religious studies into the overall Hebrew Social Studies component at early grade levels.[8]

The manual provides a detailed breakdown of all of the subjects to be covered under the Hebrew component. These sections include Hebrew Language Arts, Bible Studies, Social Studies, broken down into Jewish studies and Israeli studies, Laws, Customs and Traditions, and finally Prayer. The introduction to the manual provides a deeper insight into the methodologies used in the classroom,

---

[8]The irony found in these methods is the totally divergent approach found in areas of continental Europe when dealing with the question of Jewish Education and the role of Zionist discourse found within it. A 2006 study demonstrates that the North American, Zionist intensive curriculum is counter to the methods of teaching Jewish customs and traditions in Hebrew schools in France, and to a lesser extent in Belgium and Switzerland (Gross, 2006). Jewish Schools there all but eliminate the Zionist component of Jewish studies, instead focusing almost entirely on the French nationalism as the only nationalist discourse to be taught. This demonstrates the strength of the influence of the French state on curricular development in French schools. When questioned about the lack of Zionist-based discursive materials, the answers from teachers, parents and students alike tended to consist of a reinforcement of the French identity and a resounding shock at the question, often concluding with "We are not Americans" as a way to justify their methods of teaching and learning.

breaking down the role of the program, looking at cognitive and affective realms of

Judaism.

> The Program emphasizes integration of knowledge with love and appreciation for Jewish values, traditions, Hebrew language and the Land of Israel. The Value of Community, Klal Yisrael", that we are one people with a collective history, is also reflected within the curriculum…*Factual knowledge* is imparted with an emphasis that precepts, customs and traditions is important (EPSB, 2000a, I, emphasis added).

The curriculum itself, aside from the religious component has a particular emphasis

on the centrality of Israel in modern Jewish life. There are series of general learning

outcomes for each grade listed before the specific subject-by-subject breakdown

occurs. This includes a culture section that focuses on the Jewish Identity debate

rather heavily (EPSB, 2000a, 105). According to the summary, this culture section is

"designed to foster a development of a strong Jewish identity, a rich foundation of

knowledge about Jewish, Canadian and other cultures and the skills required for

effective global citizenship" (ibid, 105). This sentiment makes the role of Zionist

discourse and the influence of the Israeli state seem secondary, yet in the specific

breakdown there is a point-by-point itemization for each grade.

The fourth category is titled "Valuing Hebrew Language and Culture." In each

of the grades underneath this umbrella category, the goal involves an exploration of

Jewish/Israeli culture specifically, not making any sort of distinction between

Judaism as a distinct culture from Israel, extending from kindergarten to the

hypothetical twelfth grade. By the later stages of the elementary curriculum, the

specific goals look to impart "the lifelong benefits and contributions of

Jewish/Israeli culture to oneself" (ibid, 107), appearing to claim Jewish and Israeli

cultural values and norms as one and the same. [9]

When getting into the specific nature of the curriculum, this ideological conflation of Jewish/Israeli values is made even clearer in the introduction to the section. "Through exploration of Jewish history from Patriarchal and Matriarchal times all the way through Modern Israel, students will strengthen their awareness and bonds to the Jewish people and to the Land of Israel" (EPSB, 2000b, I). Activities found in the social studies curriculum, which makes up 50-100 classes of instructional time on average per year, include an emphasis on symbols and iconography of the modern state, a detailed exploration of the history and importance of Zionism in grades three and five through nine. Grade five in particular has lessons focusing specifically on the impact of North American Zionism, as well as the history of the modern Zionist movement. The grade six curriculum calls for 38 classes out of approximately 150 specifically devoted to the study of the various Israeli/Palestinian conflicts and wars, as well as an overview of the role of Zionist agencies in the context of the Israeli governmental structure. In particular, it makes reference to the involvement of the Jewish Agency and its local subsidiaries role in Jewish Education in the Diaspora.

It is in Grades six through nine that the Israel/Palestine conflict as well as the

---

[9] Even the question of Hebrew is tackled in a different way, actually having it framed as a question of identity in the classroom, to the point where not all Jewish teachers even speak the language. Zionist iconography, like flags and maps, are hardly present in the classrooms, let alone the materials (ibid, 618). This is completely counter to the North American method of teaching Jewish education, with the emphasis placed on Hebrew, Israel and contemporary Jewish life as opposed to the religious traditions, jurisprudence, ethics and customs taught in the French system, likely stemming from the lack of nationalist values found in North American cultural norms and the emphasis on pluralism and multiculturalism in Canadian and American societies.

makeup of modern Israel tends to come to the foreground, looking specifically at the nature of the conflicts from a decidedly, and unsurprisingly pro-Israel and pro-Zionist subject position. This position clearly identifies that Palestinians are terrorists, and how to define the origins of Palestinians as both a people and a term, while reinforcing the role of the land of Israel in the hearts and minds of Jews. The idea of Israel as both a Jewish and Zionist state is debated in the seventh grade, including questions of coexistence as both. This narrative culminates in the grade nine curriculum in the Holocaust studies section, asserting the link between Holocaust survivors and the (re)birth of Israel as an example of the "indestructible spirit of the Jews" (EPSB, 2000c, 22). I am not disregarding or devaluing this link. It is extremely important to remember the tragedy of the Holocaust and its effect on the collective memory of the Jewish People. This is underscored by the notion that is actually entrenched in the curriculum about the need for remembrance of the past to ensure the future survival of the Jewish people as one (ibid, 22), despite the obvious division between the communities and the state.

Tragedy once again acts as a source of unity, this time for the perpetuation of a political movement that supposedly is acting in the interests of the greater good of the community (Blanchot, 1991; Novick, 1999; Sheps 2005). This discourse is used to produce reinforce the emotional bond that exists between Jews of the Diaspora and the Land of Israel itself. The state's existence is dependent upon the remembrance of those who have fallen; it is necessary for the state to be maintained as Jewish in order to ensure the very survival of the Jewish religion, culture, and history in the future (Novick, 1999, 3), entrenched in a secondary Law of Return, the

Yad Vashem laws that granted post-mortem citizenship in Israel to those that lost

their lives in the greatest tragedy the Jewish people, had ever known. This is the

fundamental paradox of having a democratic nation state with one cultural and

religious majority defining its existence. The use of cultural and emotional

connections of the people to the place to promote a militant, nationalist ideology to

its own citizenry while encouraging such an ideological identity to the members of

Diasporas abroad has the potential to promote more hostility than peaceful

coexistence. The stress and emphasis on the Jewish community and its emotional tie

to the state of Israel through Zionist discourse is a fundamental component of

Jewish education in the Albertan and Canadian Diasporas.

Conclusions

What is discouraging about the design of the curriculum is the reliance and dependency on teaching Zionist values and culture as Jewish culture. Making Zionism the focal point of the social studies curriculum on both the Historical Judaic side as well as the contemporary component once again brings to mind both Foucault's assertion that education acts as a reflection of state power (1975, 1994b), as well as Barthes' (1964, 1967) definition of the function of ideology making culture appear as natural. The institutional normalization of violence, through teaching about the makeup of the IDF, the ideological construction of various Israeli youth movements, and even emphasizing the fact that all people get a vote in Israeli elections regardless of race or religion seems entirely unnecessary. The ideological and emotional manipulation serves to further promote a culture of dual identity for Jewish children in the Diaspora. This duality, in terms of both identities as well as national and cultural loyalties are institutionalized into the very makeup of the educational system and reinforced from an early age. It goes beyond manifesting the role of the Israeli state and Zionist discourses in the Education system; these areas of study are the core of the Jewish education provided, codified and ratified by the Edmonton Public School Board and supported by local, national and international Jewish/Zionist agencies. The terms, it appears, based on the educational resources and curricular planning, cannot possibly be separated, creating a violently imperial epistemological paradigm that is forced into Jewish children. At the very least, that is how it is being taught, as mandated by the Jewish Agency in Israel and legitimized by the Edmonton Public School Board.

Sheffer (2003) claims the Jewish people are an historical state linked Diaspora. I contend this is only a partial definition. The Jewish people are an ethno-national Diaspora in a religious context, an historical and modern state linked Diaspora in a political context, and have a sub-Diaspora of incipient Israelis whose own Jewish-ness varies from individual to individual, despite originating in the Jewish state. It is very clear that the expectation in this part of the Diaspora is that the only way to be a good Jew is to be a good Zionist, a far cry from Kitaj's assertion that a "Jew is a Jew like a table is a table" (1987/2000, 37). It is no longer a matter of believing in who you are; it becomes a question of what now. The loyalty to the Jewish state, (not necessarily inclusive of loyalty to Canada as well), is engrained into the collective consciousness and collective memory of all the students that attend these Hebrew schools. This discourse and expression of power has precious little to do with actually being Jewish, participating in the study of Torah, of Tikkun Olam (which admittedly has its own set of problems), and of feeling that connection to the history, traditions and community.

When looking at Jewish education, it is difficult to separate the Jewish from the Israeli, the Israeli from the Jewish. Yet here I am, in Canada, far away from the day-to-day realities of life in Israel. It is difficult to separate myself as a rational individual from the emotions that I feel towards the state, the sense of obligation and duty to defend it as the physical expression of the Jewish community, the place of safety and refuge for Jews everywhere. Yet here I am, in Canada. I have lived through the education that I have spent the last several pages criticizing, and I do not know if that emotional tie I have to Israel is because I am Jewish, or if it because

I was taught to believe that because I am Jewish, I must have an emotional tie to this place. The materials I was exposed to and the ideological nature of these sources, from the language of instruction, to the textbooks and articles, to the images found in these texts are all designed to reinforce this notion, this fundamental belief that Israel is mine somehow.

I still contend that the methods of education used by diasporic communities, especially in the Albertan Diasporas, have a significant impact on the way that Jews perceive themselves, each other and their relationship to the conflict in Israel/Palestine. There is a continual reinforcement of Zionist ideology, beliefs, and that sense of unwavering loyalty and support for the homeland as something worth defending at all costs, an emotional position that is virtually indefensible in any rational sense, yet one that nevertheless exists in spite of itself. Mythology is taught as history, while devaluing the mythology of the other side as propaganda. The language of the state replaces the multiplicity of languages of the Diasporas, the history is written to favor the European-immigrant majority population, and the admittance of the impact of Jewish agencies in education institutionalizes and politicizes these practices (EPSB 2000b; Rogoff, 2000, 164-67). This re-emphasizes Foucault's belief that schools contain a political anatomy (Foucault, 1975, 138), acting as a disciplinary technology to mold the docile minds and bodies of the students, essentially an administrative and political enclosure masquerading as a therapeutic space (ibid, 141-42). The political anatomy is spelled out by the role of Zionist agencies and ideologies present in so many of the materials, institutionalized into viable policy by both the Jewish agency in Israel and the curricular plans as

approved by the Edmonton Public and Calgary Catholic school boards.

The question of the role of Zionism and the notion of "post-Zionism" is engaged in a lengthy essay in the Grade 9 texts, which tend to take a view that is quite contrary to my own apparent "post-Zionist" position. The idea introduces the supposed aims and goals not only of Zionism as a social and political movement, but also its role for Jews worldwide and within the state of Israel. The underlying argument is that Israel since 1967 has migrated into the sphere of Liberal, American style Democracy, which is counter-intuitive to the very notion of a Jewish state (Schweid, 1998, cf. TT, 2003a, 223). According to this argument, if Israel wishes to be a "full-fledged democracy, it must cease to be a Jewish state" (ibid, 226), and become a nation state responsible to all of its citizens without the focus or preferential treatment given to Jews and the imparting of Jewish cultural norms and values upon the population. Schweid essentially claims that Israel must cease to be Jewish if it wants to be a democracy, yet counters his own position by asserting that the Israeli population does not see this perspective, the influence of the West, as a "relinquishing of Zionism" (ibid, 226).

One of the more problematic elements that he brings up is the Law of Return, such that any Jew from anywhere can come to Israel, gain citizenship and be taken care of by the state. It is also the law that unquestionably links the mandate of Zionism to Israel almost by default, as the state "considers itself a creation to the entire Jewish people… The goal of ingathering exiles [sic] requires constant efforts by the Jewish people in the Diaspora, and therefore the State of Israel expects all Jews, singly and collectively, to participate in building the state" (ibid, 231). Schweid

points specifically to the reclamation of Israel as a spiritual center for world Jewry and posits that education both at home and in the Diaspora is the only way to maintain the Jewish character of the state, claiming "this imperative should dictate the cultural messages of state-sponsored schools and other institutions of education" (ibid, 232).

Schweid makes an interesting assessment regarding both the state of and purpose for Zionism towards the end of the article, asserting effectively that Zionism is really only directed towards the Diaspora, and that there needs to be a concerted effort to make Zionism an Israeli movement again. According to Schweid, Zionism is merely a bureaucracy in Israel, with its leaders appointed through the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and having no real message in Israel itself. "As a socio-cultural movement that deals in educational activity and raises donations for its aims, there is no Zionist movement in Israel" (ibid, 233). Given his assertion that Zionism is a purely diasporic movement and moderated through the Knesset, while linking it specifically to the goal of socio-cultural aims and education, he essentially validates the connection that Foucault (1975) makes between education and the state, further emphasizing the purpose of Zionism and Hebrew as a "language of culture" (ibid, 233), as something that has only existed in the Diaspora post-1967. This type of Zionism, as I have suggested, appears to intentionally foster the issue of dual loyalties in Diaspora communities as a matter of policy and procedure, while the aim of using Zionist discourses in Education only furthers this argument.

This is exemplified in the notion that Israel should take efforts to create an infrastructure within its territory for "extensive educational and cultural activity"

designed for Jewish youth to travel to Israel (ibid, 232).[10] The goal of these missions

would be to act as a secondary source of education about Jewish culture and values

as well as the promotion of immigration to Israel, which is ultimately the aim of

most Zionist philosophical principles.

Irit Rogoff discusses the role constructed mythological emotion surrounding

the homeland, stating "much of the vehemently insistent nature of constructed

identities has been mobilized" through the creation and subsequent militarization of

the state and the reliance upon the supposed unified characteristics of the greater

Jewish community as one (Rogoff, 2000, 167; Nancy, 41-42). This is in relation to

how Israelis perceive themselves in relation to the conflict, and how the state itself

plays a role in perception vis-à-vis the other side. The same kind of narrative occurs

within the Diaspora as an extension of the Israeli question. Throughout this

exercise, I have been trying to get to the root of (my) Jewish identity in the Diaspora

and how it relates to Israel, how the role of Zionism could play such a significant role

in the way any Jew sees him/herself as an individual, as a Jew, and as a member of a

community with more than 5700 years of history, and how this history is linked to a

modern, democratic and supposedly pluralistic nation-state barely more than sixty

years old. This mythology, as Nancy (42) correctly alludes, is the most common part

of any community. These sets of myths serve to reinforce the interests of the state

---

[10]This is precisely what has occurred with creation of the Birthright program, a free trip to Israel for up to ten days for university aged Jewish youth, sponsored in part by world Zionist agencies, the Israeli government and private Jewish philanthropist agencies. In Canada, the birthright program is sponsored in part by the Bronfman family, who also happen to own the publishing house that produces Tal Sela and Tal Am. At the time the article was written, 1998, the Birthright program had not yet begun, starting, in Canada at least, in 2000.

and its power over the community while simultaneously defining one another. There would be no community without the myths, and conversely there would be no myths without the community (ibid, 42, 44-47). The state acts as a conduit to reinforce, perpetuate and institutionalize this relationship between the two, using education and language as two of its vehicles.

As Derrida (1982) asserts, language is a tool of ideology, which serves to reinforce Barthes' notion that ideology naturalizes culture (Barthes, 1964/1967). Language, according to the Talmud Torah curriculum guide (EPSB, 2000a, 3) is the primary method of transmitting culture. The links are present from the state, connecting through language, ideology and into the (re)formation of Jewish culture into less of a religion, less of an ethno-national Diaspora and more of a state-linked modern Diaspora. The state linked historical Diaspora is a part of the mythology used to legitimize the existence of the state as the Jewish homeland, not as a democratic country of its own merits.

The power of educational resources, the use of the official state language, and the insistence upon using mythology and iconography to stimulate an emotional bond to the state of Israel cannot be ignored, creating conditions of dual loyalties and enforcing a subject position over Diaspora Jews. These resources assert a powerful vision that Israel is the natural home of the Jews, the only safe haven, and needs to be protected from harm at any cost (Zemel, 197). It has created many generations of Jewish students who see themselves as needing to be Zionists, not understanding the mutual exclusivity of the terms. Zionism is a political ideology designed to make Israel appear as my natural home, and Hebrew my natural

language. But Israel is not my home, and I am not an Israeli citizen. I do not vote in the Knesset, and I neither feel the state, nor its current government represents my social and political positions.

It is impossible to control places of birth, or what religion any individual is born into. What can be controlled is the development of an individual identity, both within a community and exclusive from it. However the narratives present in Jewish schools tend to not allow that choice to be an individual one, as the role of Zionism is purely political, manifested through the existence of a Zionist state. Zionism is and should be a chosen identity and position, not one that is forced and indoctrinated as a social movement inclusive of all Jews worldwide, a form of "political will" that has and is being engaged in the community and by the community (Nancy, 41).

I am a Jew, but I am not a Zionist. I personally cannot be both, because to be both negates the dream of another, any other, from being able to have their home too. The very idea of this negation is counterintuitive to notions of healing the world (Tikkun Olam), of the search for knowledge, of ethics and justice, which as a religion Jews hold dear. I am proud to be Jewish; I adore the emphasis on collectivity and unity found within my own peer group, the strength, the will to survive, the passion and the history, the belief of being a religion of scholars, thinkers and teachers. These are the parts of my culture that instill my own sense of pride and respect for the religion and the secular culture that came about with it. These subjective qualities help to make me who I am, but I am a citizen of Canada, not of Israel, and these qualities alone do not define me. Diasporic Jewish education does appear, at least in this context, to be a reflection of state power. Through the use of images,

myths, languages and narratives designed to make me feel an emotional bond to a nation that is not my own, Jewish education, at least the Jewish education I received and explored creates and manifests this multiplicity within me, both as an object and subject of these institutions and state mechanisms. I am a product of the homeland and the Diaspora and yet feel bound to both and neither. I am somewhere outside the lines of nation and state, of faith and culture, of mythology and history. These binaries no longer apply, as they simply enforce another binary, one of Hawks vs. Doves that perpetuates the notion that I must have some sort of Zionist tendencies because I am a Jew of the Diaspora. That is not the case. Zionism, or rather the belief in it, is a choice, and despite my education, my history and the beliefs of my supposed community, I am choosing to not ascribe to this idea. I am a Jew. What that means to me may not necessarily mean the same thing as it would to anyone else.

<u>Bibliography</u>

Badiou, Alain (1970/2006). *Being and Event.* London: Continuum

Barthes, Roland. (1964/1967). *Elements of Semiology.* Cited from Eagleton, Terry. (2001) *Literary Theory: An Introduction.* Oxford: University of Minnesota Press

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge

Biernbaum, Jordan (2008). "Anti-Semitism is an Anachronism." York University class paper, unpublished. Accessed Feb 27th, 2009.

Blanchot, Maurice (1988). *The Unavowable Community.* Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press

Derrida, Jacques. (1982). *Margins of Philosophy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

      (1991). "Des Tours de Babel." From *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds.*
Ed. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press

Durkheim, Emile (1897/1974). *Selected Writings.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Foucault, Michel. (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences.* New York: Pantheon

      (1972). *Archaeology of Knowledge.* London: Routledge.

      (1975). *Discipline and Punish.* New York: Vinatge

      (1994a). *Ethics Subjectivity and Truth.* New York: The New Press

      (1994b). *Power.* New York: The New Press

      (1997). *Society Must Be Defended.* New York: Picador.

Gross, Zehavit (2006). "Power, Identity, and Organizational Structure as Reflected in Schools for Minority Groups: A Case Study of Jewish Schools in Paris, Brussels, and Geneva." *Comparative Education Review.* Vol. 50 (4) pp. 603-624 USA: Comparative and International Education Society.

Hall, Stuart (2000). "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." From *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews.* Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge

Kitaj, R.B. (1987/2000) "First Diasporist Manifesto." From *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews.* Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge

Levinas, Emannuel (1987). "Time and the Other" *Time and the Other [and additional essays].* Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press
(1990). Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism. London: Athlone Press

Lerner, Michael (2006/2009) "Core Vision" from
http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/core accessed Februray 27th, 2009.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas (Ed.) (2000). *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews.* London: Routledge.

      (2002). *The Visual Culture Reader.* London: Routledge

Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994). *Picture Theory.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
      (2005) "There are No Visual Media." *Journal of Visual Culture.* Vol. 4(2), pp. 257-266. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage

Nahir, Moshe (1998). "Micro Language Planning and the Revival of Hebrew: A Schematic Framework." *Language in Society*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 335-357.

Nancy, Jean-Luc (1991). *The Inoperative Community.* Oxford: University of
      Minnesota Press

Novick, Peter. (1999). *The Holocaust and Collective Memory.* London:
      Bloomsbury.

Pappe, Ilan (2009). "Israel's Message." *London Review of Books.*
      http://ilanpappe.com/?p=83 accessed January 30, 2009

Rav, Shalom (2009). "Israel and Gaza: One Geographer's Prediction."
      http://jewschool.com/2009/01/06/14707/israel-and-gaza-one-
      geographers-prediction/ accessed Jan 21, 2009.

Reshef, Nurit (ed.) (2000). *Israel Studies Manual Grade 9.* Edmonton:
      Edmonton Talmud Torah
      (2003a). *Hebrew Social Studies Grade 9 Book 1.* Edmonton:
          Edmonton Talmud Torah
      (2003b). *Hebrew Social Studies Grade 9 Book 2.* Edmonton:
          Edmonton Talmud Torah

Reshef, Nurit and Yudith Sela (2000a). "Introduction and Overview." *Talmud
      Torah Judiac Studies Curriculum Manual.* Edmonton: Edmonton Public
      School Board (EPSB)
      (2000b). "Hebrew Social Studies" *Talmud Torah Judiac Studies
      Curriculum Manual.* Edmonton: Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB)

Rogoff, Irit. (2000)."Daughters of Sunshine." From *Diaspora and Visual Culture:
      Representing Africans and Jews.* Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge
      (2002). "Studying Visual Culture." From *The Visual Culture Reader.* Ed.
          Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge

Sacks, Jonathan (1997). "Tikkun Olam: Orthodoxy's Responsibility to Perfect G-
      d's World", Orthodox Union West Coast Convention, December 1997.
      http://www.ou.org/public/Publib/tikkun.htm#_ftnref26. Accessed June
      4th, 2009.

Said, Edward. (1978). *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage Books.

David Samuels, A Reporter at Large, "Written in Stone," *The New Yorker,* April
          12, 2004, p. 48. Accessed Jan 26th, 2009

Scharfstein, Sol (1994). *Understanding Israel.* Hoboken, NJ: Ktav.

Schweid, Eliezer (1998). "The Goals of Zionism Today." From (2003a) *Hebrew
      Social Studies Grade 9 Book.1* pp. 222-234 Edmonton: Edmonton Talmud
      Torah

Sheffer, Gabriel (2003). *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad.* New York:
      Cambridge University Press.

Sheps, Stephen (2005). "The Holocaust and Collective Memory." paper submitted
      for credit in Sociology 333, University of Alberta November 2005.
          (2007). "The Crisis of Development in Post-Disengagement Palestine."
              Paper submitted for credit in Sociology 525, University of
              Windsor, December 2007.

Unknown Authors (January 4, 2009).
      http://www.jewsagainstzionism.com/news/currentarticle.cfm?id=156
      accessed January 31, 2009

Zemel, Carol (2000). "Imagining the Shtetl." From *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews.* Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge

Appendix A: Table of Images

Fig. 1: Kacyzne, Alter cf. Carol Zemel, (2000). "Imagining the Shtetl." From *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews.* p. 195. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge.

Fig. 2: Shimon, Tovah et al (1993). *Tal Sela: Ze Lo Ani (It's Not Me)* p. 26. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 3: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Yisrael Sheli (Israel is Mine)* p. 24. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 4: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Yisrael Sheli (Israel is Mine)* p. 15. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 5: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Yisrael Sheli (Israel is Mine)* p. 11. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 6: Shimon, Tovah et al (1992). *Tal Sela: Eten Lach Sheer (Bring Us Song)* Inside Back Cover. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 7: Shimon, Tovah et al (1992). *Tal Sela: Eten Lach Sheer (Bring Us Song)* p.10. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 8: Shimon, Tovah et al (1992). *Tal Sela: Eten Lach Sheer (Bring Us Song)* p.11. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 9: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Ariyot Kotev (Lion Writes)* p. 85. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal/Bronfman Jewish Education Center.

Fig. 10: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Ariyot Kotev (Lion Writes)* p. 84. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal/Bronfman Jewish Education Center.

Fig. 11: Reshef, Nurit (ed.) (2000). *Israel Studies Manual Grade 9* p. 1.Edmonton: Edmonton Talmud Torah.

Fig. 12: Shimon, Tovah et al (1992). *Tal Sela: Eten Lach Sheer (Bring Us Song)* p. 5. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 13: Reshef, Nurit (ed.) (2000). *Israel Studies Manual Grade 9* p. 25.Edmonton: Edmonton Talmud Torah.

Fig. 14: Scharfstein, Sol (1994). *Understanding Israel* p. 94. Hoboken, NJ: Ktav.

Fig. 15: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Yisrael Sheli (Israel is Mine)* p. 16. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 16: Ziv, Nili (2003). *Welcome to Modern Hebrew* p. 113. Springfield, NJ: Behrman House.

Fig. 17: Ziv, Nili (2003). *Welcome to Modern Hebrew* Outside Back Cover Springfield, NJ: Behrman House.

Fig. 18: Shimon, Tovah et al (1999). *Tal Am: Yisrael Sheli (Israel is Mine)* p. 5. Montreal PQ: Jewish Education Council of Montreal.

Fig. 19: Ben-Ari, Ronit et al (2002). *Haverim B'ivrit 5 (Friends in Hebrew 5)* p. 37. USA: URJ Press.

Fig. 20: Reshef, Nurit (ed.) (2003b). *Israel Studies Manual Grade 9 book 2* p. 35. Edmonton: Edmonton Talmud Torah.

<u>Vita Auctoris</u>

Stephen Sheps was born in Edmonton, Alberta in 1981 and attended the Edmonton Talmud Torah from 1986-1993. Stephen Attended Ross Sheppard Composite High School and graduated in 1999, going on to the University of Alberta where he attained a degree in Sociology and Political Science. He completed his M.A. in Sociology at the University of Windsor in September of 2009. Stephen is currently a PhD student at Queen's University and is expecting to graduate in 2013.