# The portrayal of the Jewish figure in Literary Texts Included in the Present Matriculation Curriculum in Hebrew for Students of the Arab Sector in Israel

**Sara Zamir**

**Ben-Gurion University, Eilat and Achva Academic College of Education**


**Sara Hauphtman**

**Achva Academic College of Education**

Sara Zamir and Sara Hauphtman

**Abstrac**t

The Hebrew literature curriculum for secondary schools in the Arab sector (course of study and Matriculation Examinations) was approved by the Israeli minister of education in March 1975; published in the director general's special circular A for 1977 (dated September / October 1976). The curriculum is still in effect and binding today.  Besides the aims regarding the essence of the discipline, such as the value of Hebrew and esthetics in literature, the curriculum also includes socio-ideological and civic aims described as "getting acquainted with the main features of the cultural heritage of the Jewish people" and "consideration for social and cultural sensitivities." Relying on a wide theoretical basis, the central hypothesis of this research claims that the literature curriculum is broadly capable of attaining these social goals.

The aim of the research has been to examine which features of the corpus of Hebrew literature selected for the curriculum constitute the basis for construing the image of the Jew throughout time. For our purposes, we examined literary works directly concerned with the image of the Jew, and Jewish narrative that mirrors the relationships between Jews and Arabs as individuals and as representatives of different cultures and traditions.  The method used in this study is combi ned qualitative-quantitative content analysis.

**A diachronic perspective – teaching Hebrew language and literature in the Arab sector from the establishment of the state to today: considerations and goals in the context of majority-minority relationships**

During the British mandate in Palestine, 1920-1948, the language of instruction in Arab high schools in most subjects was English. During this period the Arabs did not study Hebrew at all; starting in 1948, while the War of Independence known by the Arabs as "Al Naqbah" (The Great Disaster) was still in progress, the Provisional State Council of Israel decided to impose Israeli military rule on those parts of the country that, with the subsiding of the battles, were still inhabited by relatively large Arab populations. These areas included the Galilee, the foot of Samaria, the Negev, Ramle, Lod, Jaffa, Acre and Migdal.  This often challenged military rule system, which enforced a variety of laws, regulations and procedures on the Israeli-Arab population, derived its legality from the mandatory emergency defense regulations dating back to 1945, adopted and integrated into the laws of the

fledgling state of Israel.   As a result, beginning in 1948 until the gradual phasing out of its regulations in 1966, the military government was the main official Israeli institution that functioned over the Arab minority of the country, which at that time constituted about 12% of the population.  The military government, a unit within the Israel Defense Forces, included a central command, but its activities were subordinated to the CO's of the three regional commands: Northern Command, Central Command and Southern Command.  In spite of its military character (and name), it turned out that its main task was running and supervising the civil administration of the Arab minority in the country. The special supervision of the Arab minority (considered by the government as a hostile minority or even a "fifth column" necessitating "security supervision" since it was liable to help the enemy outside the country)  focused on preventing freedom of movement, assembly and other activities as well as supervising education (Baumel, 2002).

At every level, the military government's security concerns took priority over educational concerns in staffing Arab schools. This added additional layers of bureaucracy that further hampered the Arab educational system (Mor-Sommerfeld et al., 2008).

Compounding the negative presentations of Arabs in Hebrew textbooks and literature during the military government, the Jewish school system further contributed to the marginalization of the Palestinian community by giving Jewish students little, if any, exposure to the Arabic language or culture. Despite the fact that Arabic was officially designated as one of the two official languages in Israel, the study of Arabic was not required in Jewish schools as a matriculation subject. The Arabic language, like the people, was present at some superficial level, but absent at the nuts-and-bolts, practical level that would shape Israeli Jewish education into the future (Mor-Sommerfeld et al., 2008).  Accordingly, the first supervisors in charge of teaching Hebrew to the Arabs were Jewish (Shohamy, E. et al, 1996).

Teaching the Hebrew language to Arab students began immediately after the establishment of the state of Israel; beginning in the fourth grade (having reached the age of 12), Hebrew was compulsory in all Arab elementary and secondary schools; school children had to learn Hebrew 4-5 hours a week; Hebrew was compulsory in teacher-training colleges as well. In this respect, the phenomenon of diglossia for all mother-tongue speakers of Arabic has not been taken into consideration: Although native Arabs speak Arabic, they all have to be bilingual due to the diglossic nature of

Arabic. The sharp variations in the informal language spoken in different Arabic-speaking countries make it necessary to use both forms of the language, formal (Classical Arabic) and informal. For this reason, Hebrew became actually a third languages that contributed to intricacies in academic literacy (Hauptman, et al., 2008).

The government directive to introduce Hebrew in the Arab education system was very controversial at the time; it was reached only after many disagreements and lengthy, drawn-out debates among both the Israeli majority and in the Arab sector; (Shohamy and Spolky, 1999; 2002). The opposition to teaching Arabs Hebrew stemmed from political and religious reasons. One cannot ignore the connection between national and linguistic issues that runs along the line of revivalism (Kuzar, 2001; Shohamy& Spolsky, 1999). The term "revival" represents both to the revival of the Hebrew nationhood in Biblical Canaan as well as to the revival of Biblical Hebrew. (Kuzar, 2001; Shohamy& Spolsky, 1999). In other words, the renewal of the Hebrew language revivalism is harmonious with the nations' rejuvenation. Those in favor of the idea gave several compelling reasons (The Educational Encyclopedia, Part B, p. 663): Hebrew would be the key to learning about Jews and their culture; it would be an important tool for direct written and oral communication with the Hebrew-speaking community; it would prove to be an important tool for fostering Israeli citizenship. Examining these three goals shows that they focus on acquainting the target population with the Jewish people and its culture. In 1959, the elementary school curriculum for teaching Hebrew to the Arab sector was published; by and large, it was based on the above-mentioned goals; however, it was expanded to include not only additional goals such as "bringing the two communities closer," but also to discuss general didactic issues. In contrast, the secondary schools still lacked a curriculum for studying Hebrew; at the beginning of the 60's, however, the ministry of education published a curriculum for the study of Hebrew in Arab secondary schools entitled "*Hebrew Language and Literature Curriculum for Arab Secondary Schools: Grades 9 – 12.*" Those who outlined the curriculum set two major goals for teaching Hebrew language and literature: a) to impart the Arab learner with a basic, precise and comprehensive knowledge of the Hebrew language for practical and cultural purposes, and b) to provide the Arab student with an opening into Israeli culture and values in the past and present, and to facilitate the student's understanding of the Jewish community's social and cultural life.

In 1972 the Ministry of Education and Culture in conjunction with the unit for curriculum development at the University of Haifa appointed a joint committee whose function was to prepare Hebrew curricula for Arab students; however, it was not until March 24, 1975 that a curriculum for secondary schools was finally approved by the minister of education and culture. In 1976 the new format of the curriculum for secondary schools was published in the director general's special circular A (Sept. 1976); the curriculum included topics for the course of study and the Matriculation examinations; it determined that Hebrew language and literature would be taught throughout the three-year period of secondary school comprising at least four study units, but not more than six. Every unit would be allotted 90 class hours.

In spite of the context in which control and inspection occurred, especially in the previous period of military administration, in the course of outlining the 1976 curriculum a supervisor was appointed to oversee the teaching of Hebrew in the Arab sector; surprisingly, the appointed supervisor was an Arab. The new post of Hebrew studies supervisor in the Arab sector was only a part-time job (50% of a full-time job) until 1995. Among the supervisor's responsibilities was the induction and mentoring of new teachers in the system, visiting schools (field work), preparing and follow-up of new curricula in the field, training teachers to teach according to these curricula and, above all, preparation and assessment of the Matriculation examinations (Shohamy et al, 1996).

Examining the goals of the Hebrew literature curriculum for students studying in Arab schools (in the introduction of the 1976 curriculum) shows that it was aimed at:
- Leading the learners to communicate at a normal level with the Jewish populace
- Facilitating the learners' integration in the life of the country
- Preparing the Arab high school graduates to continue their studies at institutions of higher learning in Israel
- Acquainting the learner with the essential points of the Jewish people's literary and cultural heritage throughout its history and to appreciate Hebrew culture

- Fostering esthetic awareness through learning the function of linguistic forms in poetry and prose, in the expression of varied contents and through learning the extent of harmony between form and content (pp. 4-5).

Excluding the last goal, which relates to literature as a goal unto itself, all the others regard literature as a means to attain civic and cultural goals.

There are three additional introductory notes in the 1976 curriculum that are important for our purpose: a) the selected works are directed at the range of topics engaging the learners' age group; b) the selection is directed at heterogeneous composition of the target population and c) the selection also elicits "a debate of authentic issues taking into account social and cultural sensitivities and excluding texts expressing attitudes and utterances liable to provoke extreme reactions either way."

These additional notes show that the manifest declarations of the curriculum relate to the literacy needs of the learners, including the need to take part in the social discourse of Israeli society through being acquainted with its culture and heritage. Nevertheless the last note specifically aims at avoiding conflicts that might arouse "extreme reactions." Regarding this last requirement, one should ask if this requirement is feasible or if it is structurally contradictory; how can one truly learn about the authentic other as well as take part in a genuine dialogue without having to confront fundamental controversies that bear meaningful consequences upon one's life?

This research focuses on this curriculum, which has been in effect for about thirty years in the Arab schools of Israel (a new curriculum, whose general outline was published in 2004, is to gradually replace the present one still in use). The literary genres included in the 1976 curriculum are folk tales, short stories, poetry and essays; the authors and the poets whose works are being studied belong to the classical period of Hebrew literature beginning with Hebrew writing in Spain until our own period. In contrast, the new 2004 curriculum contains significant changes; for example. Sami Michael's novel *Trumpet in the Wadi*, along with other contemporary Israeli works convey the Arab-Israeli identity conflict. Other Hebrew writers belonging to the Arab and Druze community (Salam Jubran and Naim Araidi) convey the dilemmas of a torn minority.

The twenty-first century, in which the new curriculum was outlined, has seen the development of three parallel processes in the Arab education system: first, declaration of intentions for equality in budgeting of Arab education relative to Jewish education (site for the department of Arab education)**;** secondly, a reduction of the gap in educational achievement between the Jewish and Arab education systems (Hirshfeld, 2001), and thirdly, lifting of restrictions and intervention by the General Security Service in Arab education (Shatil site).

On one hand, these processes testify to the large extent of Arab integration into the life of the Jewish country giving rise to the development of the new 2004 curriculum. On the other hand, leading educators representing the Arab sector still argue that the Arab curriculum is designed to ‚de-educate', or dispossess, indigenous Palestinians pupils of the knowledge of their own people and history. It gives them only carefully screened and censored exposure to their history, culture and identity; and suppresses any aspects that challenge or contradict the Zionist narrative and mission.

Furthermore, those voices also criticize the fact that attempts made by Palestinian educators to create a more balanced or inclusive curriculum has been largely excluded by the formal, state-approved curriculum (Abu-Saad, 2006, 2008). In his works, Abu-Saad describes the difficulties of maintaining identity and culture within a mainstream school system that emphasizes values and education of the national community to the exclusion of the perspectives, worldviews, and identity formation of the minority community. In his opinion, the exclusion and active suppression of Palestinian Arab history, culture, identity, and contemporary political concerns from the curriculum has incessantly been maintained in Palestinian Arab schools. Israeli Arabs do not have autonomous control of their school system and do not hold any of the key decision-making and policy-making positions in the national educational infrastructure, which is reflective of their position in Israeli society in general.

Agbaria (2008), a professor of Educational theory and policy at Haifa University and an advisor on Arab educational matters to the Arab Monitoring Committee of Israel argues that it is not enough to deal with the immediate practical needs of Arab education—such as building classrooms or directing funds for specific programs, etc. At the very heart of the matter is a need to debate the strategic requirements and goals of this educational system. The issue relates to how much

cultural freedom is to be granted to the Arab minority to choose its identities and the values with which it wishes to live and educate its youth. Hence, he regards the demand for a separate Arab educational system not as an expression of a separatist desire to break away from the State of Israel. On the contrary, it is a demand for recognition and for support to practice their unique culture, just like the Israeli Orthodox educational system (Agbaria, 2008).

This existing gap between the Jews' and the Arabs' perceptions concerning educational decisions may stem, mainly from five crucial factors (Samucha 2001):

1. Jewish Dominance – The Jewish population built Israeli society and structured it according to its own specific insight and needs. The Arab minority, on the other hand, joined an existing society as a defeated minority. Therefore, the Arab population is inferior in the Israeli social structure, when it comes to the distribution of resources and policymaking.

2. Arabs' Link to the Palestinians and Arab Nationality – The ethnic roots, language, culture, and historical point of view of Israeli Arabs were all identical to their Palestinian counterparts until 1948. Therefore, they are loyal to Palestinian nationality, and many of them see their destiny as one they share with the Palestinian.

3. Islam - Religious views rarely limit themselves to lifestyle, and in the case of Arab Israelis, often affect their position towards the state and the Jewish majority. We can witness this development in the founding of Islamic political parties.

4. National Security – The complex link of Israel's Arabs with the Palestinians arouses suspicion among many Jews in Israel, and some see them as enemies. The second large political party's campaign slogan of the Feb. 10 general election 2009, "Without loyalty there is no citizenship", widely reflects this notion.

5. The Definition of Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State – Zionist ideology maintains that Israel is "the home of the Jewish People"; the dominant language is Hebrew language and its institutions and laws are of Jewish disposition (Amara, 2007).

All of the above seem to push both sides, Jews and Arabs, further and further away from each other and as a result deepen their dispute over educational preferences.

Respectively only a small framework of bilingual – Arabic-Hebrew – schools has been developing over the last few years. These schools are considered as revolutionary streams, not only in the educational system (Mor-Sommerfeld et al, 2008).

## Literature curriculum and textbooks as socialization agents

In every discipline, and especially in the humanities, the curriculum is based on two considerations: on one hand, there are pedagogical assessments stemming from the structure of the body of knowledge in the discipline and its pedagogical adaptation, and on the other hand the ideological considerations based, to a large extent, on a philosophy of life, reflecting, through the general aims of teaching the discipline, the character of the society, its identity and values at a given time. Curricula should be perceived as concrete expressions of social processes and social change since they themselves create beliefs and skills that society finds worthy of bequeathing to the next generation (Iram, 1991).

National Curricula is clearly a political creation mediated by the ideologies, beliefs, value systems and political agendas of the curriculum makers who decide what `knowledge‘ and `skills‘ are to be compulsory in schools-and for whom  (Hill, 2009).

The political principles behind a curriculum for 'national' education, whether it is overtly egalitarian or anti-egalitarian, support the wider objectives of governmental policy and these are of course not only social but also economic. The National Curriculum has aims beyond the controlled reproduction and re-validation of particular cultural forms and elites. It is also 'a bureaucratic device for exercising ideological control  of ruling ethnic or class groups over what goes on in schools (Althusser,  1971;  Hill, 2009). Bourdieu's cogitation (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) analyses the relationship between education and cultural formation. Though the concept "cultural capital" is central to Bourdieu's original analysis of how the mechanisms of cultural reproduction function within schools regarding social classes,

one can realize its adaptability also to ethnic textures of a given society. For Bourdieu, the education system is not, in practice, meritocratic. Its major function is to maintain and legitimate a social division.

In order to unveil the hidden themes underlying curricula, critical policy questions must be asked concerning the educational policy itself, its aims Context and impacts (Hill, 2009). Asking critical questions about educational policy, and in particular the question, `who wins and who loses`, of any education (or other) policy can enable us to better evaluate what is going on at local (classroom/ school) level, at local authority/ school district levels, and at national level. Without such critical questioning followed by educational activism the rampant inequalities that exist in education systems will continue to be reproduced (Hill, 2009)

School readers, as curriculum derivatives, are regarded as most important means of constructing social reality for the pupils. After undergoing processes of sorting and selection (that is to say, a certain board decides which learning material is going to be included or excluded from the curriculum) schoolbooks actually convey ‒legitimate knowledge‖, as social beliefs norms, values, myth as well as stereotypes. Schoolbooks are used by the entire young generation, and they are perceived to be true and objective even though they tend to reflect the mere interests of the hegemonic ideology (Apple, 1979, 1992).

This is also true of the literature curricula in Israeli schools of the various sectors of the population; on one hand, literature curricula reflect the changes that have occurred in the notion of literature as a result of a continuous and dynamic process of developing trends in the philosophy of art and literary research; on the other hand, they also reflect ideological changes and identity perceptions. Content analysis of Israeli school textbooks of the 50's and 60's of the former century reveal that most of school textbooks were meant to construct national collective identity by embeddings narratives concerning the values of Zionism and collectivism (Zamir, 2006). Nevertheless, during the last decades one can trace a reversed tendency; a growing number of narratives emphasize now the individual as well as universal-humanistic values.

The theory of literary criticism that claims literature instills values and shapes the identity of the reader can be divided into three approaches: the historical - documentary approach, the moral-ideological approach, and the socio-national approach (Feingold, 1977). The historical-documentary approach holds that literature

is an important source of information about people, cultures and historical periods; knowing "where we come from" will help the reader answer the question about "where we are going."  To "remember" is not a purely intellectual activity, but it can motivate people to act in the present and in the future.  This approach holds that literature fulfils a very important function in instilling in the student a national education: reading literature describing the characteristics and the unique features of national life in the past, the reader-learner learns about herself/ himself as a member of a nation, intensifying her/his identification with his people and society (Cohen, 1985).  The moral-ideological approach maintains that literature is a means of instilling universal human values; literature enables the reader to assimilate important universal ideals and to deal with the negative influence of extraneous ideals.  This approach stresses literary content that supports values claiming that "language is the means and literature is the form; neither the means nor the form possess any importance in themselves; they are important only because they support human values" (Fisher, 1972).  Every discussion about social and moral values is not extraneous to literature (A. B. Yehoshua, 1998, pp. 11-28), and it is not "forced" upon it; on the contrary, it is an immanent part of the literary work.  The advocate of this approach, Tzvi Adar (1949) claims that literature does instill values, and consequently we should teach and study mainly those authors and works from which the student can learn about man as the epitome of lofty values including "justice, hope, truth, mercy and peace."  Accordingly, only through empathy and criticism can the reader "awaken to a really human life (ibid, p. 906).  Levingston (1976) too favors character education through literature claiming: "In front of you, today, he is a pupil, but tomorrow he will be a citizen of the great wide world" (ibid. p. 73).  The socio-national approach considers literature as a means of instilling in the pupil love and loyalty for his people, country and fatherland.  One of the indications of this approach is that it can be felt strongly in periods of national crisis or mental stress; in such times there is a greater desire to see literature as a means to refresh values or to restore them.  An outstanding example of this approach can be found in an article written by Iram and Yiaoz (1981) objecting to the prevalent trend to teach literature disassociated from any discussion of values, preferring to stick to the text and its poetic features and perennially trying to forge "tools of literary analysis."  In their view, evading any ideological commitment in the realm of nationality, religion and

state ("church" and state) exerts a pernicious influence on the image and world of education.

Additionally, not only has teaching literature in the framework of studying a foreign language added value in perceiving the other, but the literary work of the other language offers the student the possibility to observe how her/ his own image and her/ his own narrative are portrayed in the other's point of view; it is also an authentic source for getting acquainted with the "other" culture and its narrative, providing a source of comparison and contrast.

**The aim** of the research has been to examine whether, how and which features of the corpus of Hebrew literature (compulsory and elective) comprised in the matriculation curriculum of the Arab sector constitute a source for portraying an image of the Jew.

**The researched selection** includes the literary texts published in the director general's special circular A (Sep.1977). The texts required by the curriculum were collected in three anthologies, *Ofek Latalmid* (three volumes), as well as in the three teacher's guides to the anthologies edited in 2003 by Subahi Addawi and published by Alnahadia Publishers.

**Method**

The methodology we applied in our study is content analysis; a series of procedures is used in analyzing the text aimed at arriving at significant diagnoses and generalizations from within the text (Weber, 1985). Compared to other tools of measurement, this method has 3 major advantages: it is not invasive; contrary to other techniques such as interviews, responding to questionnaires, and projection tests, it is free of errors in data analysis stemming from the respondents' awareness of the examiner's presence and expectations.

Content analysis is capable of dealing with puzzling data; while in techniques such as interviews and questionnaires the data is obtained in a structured manner so that every category being investigated is known beforehand, in content analysis the analyst may not be able to predict all the categories before conducting a preliminary check of the text.

Context analysis is context sensitive; the interpretation of the data in the process of content analysis is supposed to follow the processes occurring in reality, including political processes; it is a technique that is able to deal with a large amount of data such as data culled from textbooks (Krippendorff, 2004).

The analysis of texts can be carried out by using three primary methods: a) an analysis of qualitative content, b) an analysis of quantitative content, and c) a combination of both (Gull, 1981). Qualitative content analysis is based on understanding the content and the commentary that goes with it. This method gives a description of and comments about the principles and the values characterizing the description of events in the text. Depending to a large extent on the analyst's intuition, the method and the resulting evaluation cannot be expected to be objective. In contrast, quantitative content analysis is an objective and systematic method describing quantitatively clear messages. A distinction can be made between space analysis and frequency analysis; when doing space analysis, the analyst can point to the amount of space given to a certain event by counting the number of pages or lines in the text; the quantities are reported either in absolute numbers or relatively to other subjects. In frequency analysis, the analyst reports the number of times that a concept, a subject or idea are mentioned in a certain part of the story.

The third method is a blend of qualitative and quantitative analyses; in other words, it combines the systematic drawing of valid conclusions derived from a text, and is based not only on the understanding and interpretation of the researcher (naturalistic generalization), but also on numbering outstanding and recurring components in the text itself. In order to classify the utterances and the ideas in texts into unequivocal and independent categories, the method requires a detailed system of criteria. To balance the disadvantages of qualitative analysis, many passages are quoted from the text being evaluated; the purpose of the quotations is to enable the researcher to reach a high level of precision in reporting the content (Weber, 1990). The extent to which the qualitative and quantitative methods are blended depends on the views and inclinations of the researcher; in the present study we will use a synthesis of both with emphasis on qualitative analysis.

The categories selected for content analysis of "the image of the Jew" include the following components: the image of the Jew, religious Jewish narrative, national Jewish narrative, and Jewish-Arab relationships.

Religious Jewish narrative (Judaism as a religion):

How dominant is religion in the life of the Jew? How are religious Jewish characters portrayed?

National Jewish narrative (Judaism as a nationality):

Are there any historical references about the national roots of the Jew? If so, which historical events are referred to and which are not? To what extent is the Arab learner informed about the Jews' history in regard to its national definition including, the Jewish immigration to Israel since the late nineteenth century the Holocaust and Israel's wars?

The image of the Jew as a man (human qualities):

What adjectives are used to describe Jews? Which qualities are manifestly stated and which are contextually derived?

Jewish-Arab relationships:

How are relationships perceived? Are the relationships characterized by coexistence or tension and hostility?

All the texts were scanned for the aspects defined above; the categories can be replicated (i.e. additional researchers can follow the analytic method setting the motifs accordingly) and are mutually exclusive so that when setting a piece of information, it can only be subsumed under only one category.

The high validity of this analytical device was attained by strict adherence to the following conditions:

1) Sampling validity; the data was processed through representative sampling of matriculation Hebrew literature textbooks for Arab secondary schools (all the presently used anthologies were sampled).

2) Semantic validity; high semantic validity is attained when the language in which the criteria are expressed matches the language of the text and its contexts.

3) Process-oriented validity; process-oriented validity answers the question to what extent were the categories derived from accepted theories and models.

**Findings**

**Diagram 1: Total number literary works dealing with the portrayal of the Jew in all the works included in the anthologies**
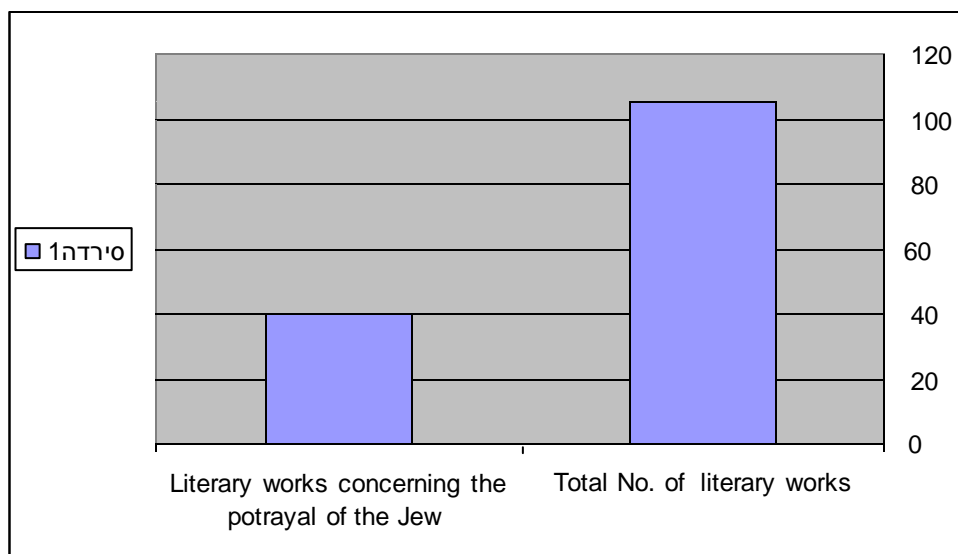


The anthologies comprise 105 literary works. Only 40 deal with the portrayal of the Jew: 14 deal with Jewish- religious narrative, 16 deal with Jewish- national narrative, 6 deal with the image of the Jew in general, and 4 works present Jewish - Arab relationships.

**Jewish (religious) narrative**

The religious or traditional Jew living by the laws and customs of his religion or, alternatively, the religious Jew trying to cope with the fulfillment of the commandments of his religion and tradition is mentioned in various works in the anthologies.

In fourteen cases, the figure of the Jew is actually the figure of the religious person adhering to the commandments, learning Torah and trusting in God. The collected passages show that the religious person's loftiest commandment is the observance of the Sabbath: For example, Haim the porter and his wife Hanna, who live in abject poverty, agree that the most important things are "the Sabbath candles and bringing the sick child back to health" respectively ("Harmony in Home Life" by Y. L. Peretz, *Ofek A*, p. 79), and in the poem "My Mother, of Blessed Memory,"

instead of buying bread, the mother prefers to buy Sabbath candles (H. N. Bialik, *Ofek A*, p. 209).

Whether his life is good or bad, the Jew turns to God and praises Him; six references to this are found in the selected poetry of the Middle Ages of the anthologies: For example, in the poem "Humble of Spirit," the worshiper prays to God emphasizing his insignificance since "before You I consider myself / a small worm of the earth" (Rashbag, R. Shlomo Ibn Gvirol, *Ofek A*, p. 175

In Shalom Aleichem's "Happy is the Orphan," too, (*Ofek B* p. 55) Judaism and its commandments go hand in hand with the protagonists of the story providing the reader with explanations about religion. In this case, the figure of the Jew is associated with Jewish humor, which helps to mitigate the young orphan's difficulties and the effects of abject poverty.

In the second volume of the anthology, in three different instances, we encounter the modern Jew; alienated from his Jewish roots and occupied in worldly affairs, he is devoid of any religious values; Judaism is left in the background, but leaving it exacts a heavy toll; For example, in the poem "*Version* (*Nussach*)" (Ben Zion Tomer, Ofek B, p. 261), the poet glorifies his father's life compared to his own: "My father breathed with God – but I with a vulture ". Those images that are taken from God's Covenant with Abram ("And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away", Genesis 15, 11) convey the violation of the biblical promise by the modern Jew.

The religious Jew is also compelled to deal with his religion's strictures: Mirkado, who is considering divorcing his barren wife because "our holy Torah gives the husband the right to send his (barren) wife away if he desires to have children." Eventually, he turns out to be a loyal and devoted husband and changes his mind ("*As a Moment*," Yehuda Burla, *Ofek A*, p. 88).

The great number of literary works dealing with religious Jewish narrative and the depth devoted to the subtleties of "Jewish bookcase" turn the religious Jew into a dominant character, one may pre-suppose, in the perception of the Arab learner as well.

**Jewish (national)narrative (Judaism as a nationality)**

Our research shows sixteen passages relating to Jewish narrative in an Israeli-Zionist context; in most of these passages the references to the Israeli-Zionist context are marginal and unfocused.  However, in some of them, in spite of the authors' clear link to Zionist narrative, the editors chose to ignore the link in both their comments about the work and about the authors.

For instance, Binyamin Zeev Hertzel, the visionary of the Jewish state, is introduced as "Theodore" Hertzel, the name he was given by his assimilated family in Budapest ("A Bee Under the Palm Tree," Theodore Hertzel, *Ofek A*, p. 47).  The *Ofek* anthology series for the students also ignores the Zionist biography of the poet Rachel in spite of the fact it includes eight of her poems; instead, they stress her affinity with Rachel, the Biblical matriarch.  In contrast, the teacher's guide (A) mentions the fact that Rachel was a pioneer.

The return to the Land of Israel is sometimes mentioned only incidentally, as in "The *Shaver*" (Yitzhak Karonzon, *Ofek A*, p. 115); the narrator would steal into the bathroom, lock the door, and "assemble my father's shaver, which he had brought with him from Latvia when he "made *alyah" (immigrated)* to the Land of Israel in 1934" (ibid. p. 115).

The Jews' ethnic dilemmas following their arrival in the country are presented as a conflict between eastern and western culture in the story "*Opto-Biography*" (Amnon Shamush, *Ofek B*, p. 139).

The Holocaust is not included in the first volume of the anthology (A), but is referred to incidentally in the poem "*The Shirt of the Camp Inmate*" (Avraham Trainin, *Ofek A*, p. 199), a poem added as associative "enrichment"  to the banquet poem "*Striped Shirt*" (Moshe Even Ezra, *ibid.* p. 192).

**The image of the Jew as a man (disassociated from the religious or national context)**

The Jew's good qualities are associated with his wisdom; in this context, King Salomon is the wisest; he understands the human mind as well as animal behavior ("King Salomon and the Bragging Turtledove," H.  N. Bialik, Ofek A, p. 11; "The Legend of the Three and Four," H. N. Bialik, Ofek A, p. 11; "King Salomon and the

Bee," H. N. Bialik, Ofek A, p. 25; "Salomon  and the Three Brothers," H. N. Bialik, Ofek A, p. 51; "The Inheritance Judgment," H. N. Bialik, Ofek A, p. 59).

The figure of the Jew as a wise person is also found in "How to Understand the Father's Will" (a Persian folk tale, Ofek B, p. 42).  The Jew in the tale plays the role of the wise person who is able to understand the deeper, and correct, meaning of the father's will.  He is the one who explains to the son how to act in accordance to the will after the son has erred, suffering great physical pain as a result.  Thanks to the "clever Jewish doctor" (p. 42), the situation returns to normal.


## Jewish-Arab  relations

Only four selections deal with the quality of relationships between Jews and Arabs.

Relationships between Jews and Arabs are not directly discussed in the first volume of the anthology, but can be understood from two selections that focus on a completely different topic; one story embodies hostile relationships and the other humane relationships in which people help each other: in 'The Cake" (Ytzchak Karonzon, Ofek A, p.102, the Arabs are incidentally represented by the infiltrators, the term used for Arab refugees infiltrating into the country in the period between the 1949 Armistice agreements and the 1956 Sinai Campaign.  The editors have translated the word "infiltrators" with another word that means "trespassers" (lit. "people stealing in"), which has no negative security connotations.  In contrast, in "The Dream Village Far from the Moon" (Yigal Lev, *Ofek A*, p. 136), some adolescents (no nationality given) that escape from an institution for juvenile delinquents, at the risk of being caught, help a victim of an accident get to hospital by
going back to the site of the accident in a car driven by an Arab. In the second volume of the anthology, Smilamsky's story "Muhammad" (p. 109) enables us to glimpse into the relationships of Jewish, Arab and Bedouins neighbors; exploiting the cheap labor of Bedouin workers, a symbiotic relationship based on "give and take" seems to develop between Jews and Bedouins: the Jews allow the Bedouins to use their water and their fields for pasture, and "the inhabitants of the *moshavot* (communal farming villages) found cheap workers among them" (ibid. p. 112).  Once, the Bedouins even came to help the Jewish farmers by beating back the peasants from the Arab village

that had come to attack the Jewish *moshava* (ibid. p. 112). While the questions for the students relate abundantly to the subject of Arab-Jewish relationships (pp. 13, 19, 20) and to the image of the Arab in Hebrew literature (assignment 27, p. 124), they neither relate to the problems of the Jewish settlement in the country in the face of Arab hostility (presented in the story) nor to the dispossession of the Arabs by Jews. In addition, there is no comparison between the way Jews relate to Bedouins and the way Arabs do; assignment 8 (p. 123) brings up this subject, but only very indirectly, emphasizing the "mixed feelings" the Jews have toward the Bedouins, without emphasizing the fact that eventually a symbiotic relationship develops between them but, one which is based on domination-subordination.

The third volume of the anthology deals openly with the Jewish-Arab conflict in all its intensity ("*Swimming Competition*," Binyamin Tammuz, p. 92).  Binyamin Tammuz' story expresses the misery of both peoples, their conflict over national rights to the Land of Israel and the futility of war as a solution to their existential anxieties. The final sentence of the story expresses the message that in this lengthy war between the two peoples there are no winners: "We are all vanquished" (ibid. p. 106).  The paucity of the selections dedicated to Jewish-Arab relationships (3.8% of all the selections included in the anthology) is liable to create a wrong impression about the importance and centrality of these relationships in Jewish and Arab Israeli life. Omitting, consciously or in unconsciously, narratives that deal directly with the Jewish-Arab interactions may sharpen the antagonism between the two as well as reinforce false consciousness of parallel worlds.

**Diagram 2: literary works dealing with the image of the Jew divided into categories**
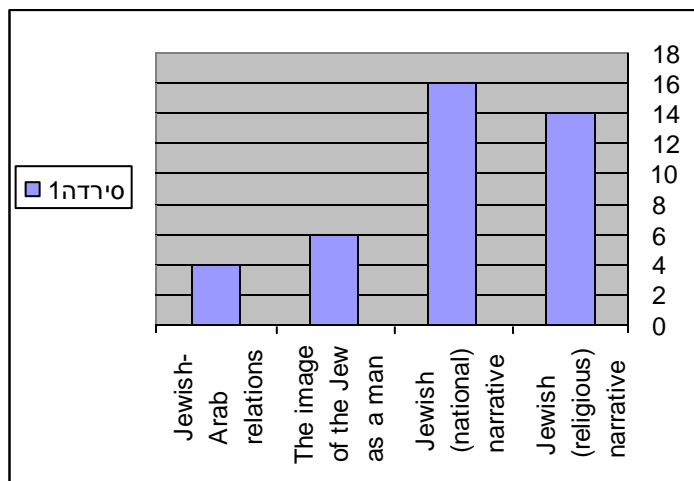


Although, on the surface, the category "Jewish- national narrative" includes the highest number of literary selections (16), in most cases the references to the national-Zionist connection are only incidental or marginal, constituting only a setting for completely different stories.

**Discussion**

The analysis of the selections included in the anthologies indicates that the editors have a typecasted approach to the image of the Jew; the Jews, whether men or women, presented in most of the selected literature live in the Diaspora in abject poverty, lacking even the most basic things in life; children are starved for food and parents struggle to make a living.

The Jewish figures in most cases are religious characters living by traditional values: they observe the Sabbath; they believe in the Torah and are bound by its spiritual and religious values, which fill his life and determine his conduct. The modern Jews, on the other hand, are presented as rather alienated from their Jewish roots.

A general outstanding quality characterizing the Jewish figure is his wisdom; this quality is embodied in the wisest of all men, King Salomon. The absence of additional human qualities in the Jewish figures presented in the anthologies creates a sort of stereotyped approach to the image of the Jew; although wisdom is considered a

virtue, in the plots of the selected stories this virtue is to a certain extent contaminated with cunning as well.

The points of contact between Jews and Arabs within pre-state Israel have not forebode well for the future; in the second volume of the anthology, Smilamsky's story "*Muhammad*" allows us to glimpse into the inter-relationships of Jewish, Arab and Bedouin neighbors; while Jews and Bedouins develop a sort of symbiotic relationship based on "give and take" and exploitation of cheap Bedouin labor, the relationship between Jews and Arabs remain hostile. Hostility between the two peoples also characterizes the first ten years of the existence of the state of Israel as reflected in "*The Cake*"; the story makes incidental references to Arab infiltrators, who constituted a serious security problem for the fledgling state. In the third volume, in "*Swimming Competition*" the conflict between Arabs and Jews is attacked directly for the first and only time; the story expresses the misery of the two peoples, their conflict over the rights to the Land of Israel, and the futility of war as a way of solving their existential anxieties.

If the curriculum and the anthologies arising from its contents are a concrete expression of social processes and changes (Iram, 1991), the anthologies we analyzed in this study are indicative of a trend heading toward social segregation in the country. The young Arab learner is exposed mostly to the image of an archaic religious Jew, and fairly less to the modern Jewish Israeli with whom he/she has existential disputes; by consolidating this image of the modern Jew in the Arab learner's consciousness we run the risk of avoiding real discussion about contemporary dialogue.

If we follow Feingold's (1977) approach, the anthologies examined in this study do not fulfill their purpose as an important source of information about people, cultures and historical periods. We believe that literature and the teaching of literature have not been used to "provide the Arab student with an opening into the culture of Israel in the past and present, and facilitate his understanding of the social and cultural life of the Jewish community of the state of Israel," as stated in the introduction to the Hebrew curriculum for the Arab learner.

**Conclusion**

The literary works of a second language are considered authentic sources for getting acquainted with the "other" culture; there are three main reasons for this:

literature provides the reader with the opportunity to learn about the "other," it helps the reader get acquainted with the "other's" narrative, and it also enables the reader to experience a modicum of contact with the "other," either through the reading (Gordon, 1983) or through the plot, which may include analogies between protagonists representing the reader and the "other." The advantages of literary works of a second language become even more significant in the light of tensed relationships between parties which are bound to nourish their negative images and stereotypes about each other through violent reality.

However, the analysis of the selections included in the Ofek anthologies, including the accompanying teacher's guide, shows that the portrait of the Jew that emerges is mostly slanted; the portrait hardly depicts an updated image of the Israeli-Jew but rather a profile of the religious exilic Jew, concealing the Jew's modern nationalist affinity. This format, according to the writers of the curriculum and the editors, seems to conform to the requirement found in the introduction to the goals of the anthologies: i.e. to elicit "a discussion of authentic issues, taking into account the social and cultural sensitivities and excluding texts expressing attitudes and utterances liable to provoke extreme reactions either way."

We cannot help but wonder about the intensity of the tensions existing between Jews and Arabs if so many touchy issues must be avoided; two important goals of teaching literature, that is to say "leading the learner to communicate at a normal level with the Jewish population" and "facilitating the learner's integration in the life of the country" might be missed altogether. We believe that textbooks, on both sectors in Israel, should present voices explaining each other's perspectives on the controversial issues. It is important for the students on both sides to have a glance into the narrative of the other side, not necessarily as a means of convincing someone of the justification of the other's narrative, but as a means of increasing the students' ability to understand the complex world that they live in (Baskin, 2009). In this context of the Curriculum in Hebrew for Arab Israeli Students, it would be possible for the students to understand the Israeli sense of victimhood emerging from narratives about Jewish persecutions and the Holocaust. Together with narratives embedded in Israeli textbooks regarding the sense of deprivation among Arabs, future generations would be able bridge the apertures between the nations.

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Sara Zamir and Sara Hauphtman

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Correspondence:
Dr. Sara Zamir
KESHET 5
NESS ZIONA
ISRAEL
70400

Telephone No: 972-77-9255559
Fax No (mobile): 972-52-3969288
E-Mail: sarahz@bgu.ac.il