**Metaphorical language in the speeches of Yasser Arafat, former president of the Palestinian National Authority**

# Abstract

This paper shows how Yasser Arafat, the former president of the Palestinian National Authority (1994–2004), relied on metaphor as a critical rhetorical device to promote his ideological position of strong opposition to the discriminatory and brutal policies of the Israeli government toward the Palestinian people, and its policy of building settlements in the Palestinian territories. The specific examples of Arafat’s use of metaphor, discussed below, concern the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, its systematic violation of human rights, ignoring the basic needs of Palestinians, and its refusal to recognize a Palestinian state. The paper assumes that Arafat’s use of metaphor in his political discourse has unique rhetorical characteristics that help sharpen his messages, with the aim of emphasizing Palestinian suffering and positively influencing Israel’s discriminatory patterns of activity toward them. That is its aim is to make Israel recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, grant them historical justice, and implement a two-state solution that would establish a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Keywords: political metaphors; political discourse; Yasser Arafat; Palestine, Israel

# 1 Introduction

This paper discusses the use of metaphor in the political discourse of Yasser Arafat, the former president of the Palestinian National Authority (1994‒2004). The aim of the paper is to shed light on the use of metaphor as a rhetorical device in Arafat’s political discourse. The paper assumes that Arafat’s use of metaphor in his political discourse has distinct rhetorical characteristics that can be identified, and that he chose specific metaphors to highlight the Palestinian suffering that results from Israel’s discriminatory policies toward them. Conveying this message by using metaphor as a rhetorical device may make Arafat’s messages more understandable to his audience, and thus help effect social and political change that would be reflected in a positive shift in Israel’s attitude toward Palestinians.

This paper argues that Arafat’s choice of metaphors is not random, but is designed to serve his political positions and, frequently, to express sharp criticism of Israel’s racist conduct against the Palestinians. Such a choice reflects how Arafat’s audience understands and perceives the world and serves to persuade them to take a stand. Arafat’s use of the phrase “the whirlpool of violence and terrorism,” for example, employs a manipulative metaphor whose function is to highlight and thereby deter Israel’s excessive violence against the Palestinians, which leads to violence on the part of the Palestinians, causing a reciprocal “whirlpool” of violence and terror that will not cease as long as Israel adheres to its policy of subjugating the Palestinians.

We adopted a cognitive approach in our analysis of these metaphors. This is based not on coincidental similarities between two objects from different fields, but rather on the conceptualization of one field through the other. The above “whirlpool” metaphor, for example, uses natural imagery to conceptualize Israel’s policy of discrimination, deprivation, and excessive use of force against the Palestinians. The paper examines a set of examples from Arafat’s speeches taken from the following Palestinian newspapers between 1995 and 1998: *Al-Quds*, *Al-Sha’ab*, *Al-Ayam*, and *Al-Haya Al Jadida*. Several further metaphors were collected via the internet, from Arafat’s political discourse, from his interviews, and from his speeches to the United Nations.

The study uses a collection and sorting methodology, according to which examples of metaphors from different fields were collected and then sorted into categories: nature, war, the human, historical events relating to the Jewish people, and so on. Next, an attempt was made to create a complete set of metaphors, based on their rhetorical characteristics, and to demonstrate how Arafat intentionally chose them in order to positively influence the policies of the Israeli government.

**2 The Holocaust in Israeli discourse**

Prior to the 1967 Six-Day War, the Holocaust was not an obvious part of everyday reality in Israel. It was not taught in schools and was rarely mentioned in the homes of survivors. The decision by Egyptian ruler Gamal Abed al Nasser to close the Suez Canal and block the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships, coupled with the sense that the country’s survival was in jeopardy, led to tensions, mainly among the families of survivors. However, Israel’s decisive and total victory in the war offered certain proof that the only way to ensure the survival of the Jewish people in Israel was to maintain a strong military. Israel would guarantee that there would never be another Shoah (Holocaust). Since then, almost every politician repeatedly appeals to the Holocaust when making demands regarding the borders of Israel and its enemies, and in all negotiations over the occupied territories under the control of the Israeli army (Keren 2015:173).

In the period between the 1967 and the 1973 wars, the Israelis’ sense of security in their country’s future and their sense that Israel was morally in the right grew stronger. The threat posed to Israel’s existence by these two wars only reinforced the belief held by many, including Holocaust survivors and the soldiers who fought in these wars, that Israel had a right to hold the occupied territories and to control their populations (ibid.: 174).

In the wake of these wars, the subject of the Holocaust arose whenever there were discussions or arguments about the control of these territories. For example, plans to enter into negotiations were termed “boarding the train to Auschwitz.” At the same time, strong criticism emerged concerning the conduct of IDF soldiers toward the Palestinian populations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz even compared their behavior to that of German soldiers during the Nazi period (ibid.).

The most important event occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century with the disengagement from Gaza, in 2007. During this contentious event, Jewish settlers employed symbols from the Holocaust, such as yellow stars, and referred to security forces by Holocaust-era terms, including “Nazis” and *Kalgasim* (a derogatory Hebrew word meaning ‘troopers,’ cruel soldiers of an oppressive regime). The settlers also claimed that they were Holocaust survivors or the children of Holocaust survivors and sought to use this aspect of their identity as a reason for halting the disengagement. Since then, the use of the Holocaust for every political purpose has continued unabated. This includes Israeli diplomacy – ranging from taking all high-ranking diplomats to visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum as the preamble to policy discussions with Israeli leaders and ending with Prime Minister Netanyahu’s speeches to the United Nations.

Many in Israel’s left have criticized the emphasis that Israel’s political culture places on the uniqueness of the Holocaust as excessively focusing on Jewish victimhood. They believe that it has been exploited to justify Israel’s aggressive policies toward the Arab world and Israelis’ moral blindness to the wrongs carried out against the Palestinians in their name (Margalit 1988: 61). In this context, the *Syrian Times* argued that “a country that continually uses, and too often manipulates, Holocaust imagery to justify its policies of self-defense and ‘never again,’ cannot complain when the rest of the world uses those same standards to make judgments concerning its own policies” (Litvak and Webman 2009: 325).

Renowned Israeli Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer contends that the term Holocaust has become ‘flattened’ in the public mind because any evil that befalls anyone anywhere becomes a Holocaust: Vietnamese, Soviet Jews, African-Americans in American inner cities, women suffering inequality, and so on (ibid.).

Van Dijk (1984: 13, 40) focuses on the “rationalization and justification of discriminatory acts against minority groups.” He designates the categories used to rationalize prejudice against minority groups as “the 7D’s of Discrimination.” They are dominance, differentiation, distance, diffusion, diversion, depersonalization or destruction, and daily discrimination. These strategies serve, in various ways, to legitimize and reinforce the difference from “the other, by, for example, dominating minority groups, excluding them from social activities, and even destroying and murdering them” (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 22).

# 3 Theoretical framework

## 3.1 Rhetoric

Language is the primary means through which humans understand the world. Speech is the expression of wisdom (*sophia*), allowing people to reason about a situation, construct a dialogue, understand, and investigate a subject. Humans have developed a strong ability for verbal and written expression, without which they could not realize any intellectual achievement beyond that of animals (Gitay 2010: 27; Searle 2002: 18). Communication is a fundamental action that unites and encourages a diverse, variegated society (Graber 1993: 305; Mio 1997: 113). Rhetoricians, knowing the importance and power of words, adopt strategies that can be realized through the use of words, their primary tools. They use words in a sophisticated manner to create a new reality that their listeners will accept. This is done by first building a bridge of consent with listeners, after which the work of persuasion is undertaken on the basis of this created consent (Gitay 2013: 120).

Rhetoric has been called “verbal manipulation,” because, when used correctly and effectively, written or oral expressions can be intentionally directed not only to convey information, but to influence, persuade, and motivate others to take a certain action. Oral and written rhetorical devices are widely used by many people and in many areas of life. People are social creatures, and their very existence and ability to act depend on their ability to communicate in an understandable way. While spoken and written words are used primarily for the exchange of information, virtually all people, ordinary citizens and rulers alike, have an instinctive urge to persuade others to accept their opinions, inclinations, and preferred lifestyle. The skill of persuasion is the ability to change the opinions or attitudes of others through some means of communication. Since the times of ancient Greece, rhetoric has been a significant source for enhancing public communication, and this is no less true today (Kayam and Sover 2013: 43).

Aristotle (2002) defined rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion” (Kayam and Sover 2013: 44). Verbal persuasion was seen as essential for the advancement of public affairs, and a skill every citizen needed to establish a place in the social system (Aristotle 2002). The actual t eaching of the art of speech and the discipline of rhetoric began in the fifth century bc, after the tyrannical regime of Syracuse was overthrown and replaced by a democratic regime. Many of the city’s residents had been exiled or had fled, and upon their return, they discovered that the tyrants had expropriated their lands and property. A wave of property lawsuits followed. Two citizens of Syracuse, Corax and Tisias, designed a method of rhetoric to guide people arguing cases in court. Eventually, in the heyday of the Athenian state, rhetoric was used in the courts and in the assembly, and echoes of this style are also found in tragedy, comedy, philosophy, and historiography from that time (Aristotle 2002; Kayam and Sover 2013: 44).

**3.1.1 Rhetoric in the Arabic language**

Rhetoric, in its classic sense of using language to influence and persuade, is particularly salient in Arabic. In Arab culture, rhetoric is understood as the ability to deeply engage one’s listeners through language that is used with subtlety, style, and rhythm (Patai 1973: 48). Arabic is a musical language, meant to be evocative, to affect listeners, and touch their hearts. The spoken word can evoke powerful emotions, shape behavior, and have an impact far beyond the scope of its content.

American-Arab historian Hitti noted that the Arab people are particularly ardent in their admiration for literary expression, both spoken and written, and that the Arabic language is unparalleled in its ability to exert a strong and irresistible influence on its audience (Hitti as quoted in Darshan 2000: 3). For example, it has been noted that modern audiences in Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo are deeply moved by the recitation of poems or speeches in classical Arabic, which they only vaguely or partially understand. The rhythm, rhyme, and melodic quality of the language exert an effect on listeners, which is referred to as “lawful magic.”

Another aspect of Arabic rhetoric (= *balāġa(h)*) is expressed in exaggeration (= *mubālaġa(h)*) and overemphasis, as rhetorical devices (see Darshan 2000: 4 on Patai 1973). For example, on the eve of Israel’s War of Independence in 1948, leaders of Arab countries made boastful statements, which deviated far from the truth, in order to evoke a certain impression of the situation and to generate enthusiasm for their political desires and aspirations. For example, the Syrian president announced: “I am happy to tell you, with confidence, that we even have an atomic bomb at our disposal, yes, a homemade one. . .” The prime minister of Iraq declared: “All we need is a few brooms to sweep the Jews into the sea” (Patai 1973: 49–50). These statements had no basis in reality, and a deep chasm separated their words and deeds.

Using rhetoric as a means of persuasion, particularly as a means of gaining control over the masses, has changed in modern times, because people today understand reality primarily through the media. The phenomenal growth of the media has undoubtedly affected the process of transmitting and receiving messages (Schaffner and Sellers 2010). Television and the internet have created virtually unlimited possibilities to manipulate audiences, especially through messages and means that are primarily used for the purpose of mass marketing and sales (Galili 2004; Kayam and Sover 2013: 44).

People may obtain power and advance their political positions through the effective use of rhetorical devices. Politicians in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries behave differently than did political leaders in previous, more traditional, periods. German researchers have termed this phenomenon “new politics” (Kayam and Sover 2013: 45), referring to the emergence of industrialized democracies and the decline of political parties in Western liberal democracies, both the result of the expansion of mass media and the personalization of politics (Galili 2004).

In the past four decades, many scholars have discussed the sweeping social changes that led to the emergence of new politics in industrialized democracies in the West. These changes are reflected in the transition from materialist values to post-materialist values and have led to the formulation of a new paradigm. Some have argued that this new paradigm represents a transition from “old politics” that were concerned with economic growth, maintaining public order, national security, and a traditional lifestyle, to a “new politics” that is focused on individual freedom, social equality, and quality of life. As a society achieves a certain level of economic prosperity, public attention shifts away from economic problems and toward issues related to quality of life. Therefore, people prefer leaders with a flexible governing style and strong communication skills, who tend to resemble effective managers able to empower their followers (Galili 2004; Kayam and Sover 2013: 45).

## 3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that is used in discourse analysis. Focused on how social and political power is created and maintained through language., it seeks to expose discursive biases and manipulations that serve political interests and advance controversial ideological positions, and to highlight the methods or stratagems through which the discourse produces or maintains an unequal balance of power in a society. CDA aims to expose the linguistic, cultural, and historical roots that support the practices – the modes of action – that preserve the balance of power. The basic premise of the approach is that discourse has the capacity to shape social identities and establish relations between groups of people and individuals. CDA thus emphasizes the ways in which social structures embody the existing balance of power and control in the society through discourse: how the discourse produces them, approves them, challenges them, or legitimizes them. It seeks to understand, expose, and ultimately oppose social inequality (Hart 2010: 13–4; Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 361; Meyer 2001: 15; Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 32; van Dijk 2001: 352; Wodak 2001a: 10).

The term “power” is the main concept in CDA, and the discourse mechanism is seen as a central way to actualize power in social contexts. This premise is fostered by the thinking of social philosophers such as Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu, and others who drew attention to the central role of language in constructing social reality (Hart 2010: 13–14; Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 361; Meyer 2001: 15; Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 32).

For Foucault, discourse is a representation of knowledge about a certain subject; it is linked to knowledge production through language. Foucault argues that the term “discourse” relates not only to language but to action modes (practices), rules, and regulations. Discourse constructs and defines the objects of our knowledge. It controls how we talk about a subject or act in relation to it; it determines the accepted ways of talking about it, and thus also limits other possibilities for knowledge construction about the same subject. A discourse will never consist of one statement, one text, one act, or one source; it will appear in a variety of texts and different institutional contexts in the society (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 362).

According to Foucault, “Words/Things” have meaning and can be called real only in a specific historical context. For example, “mental illness” is not an “objective” object that means the same thing in every era and every culture. Thus, the term “mental illness” does not signify something objective in the world. The object it represents is an outcome of the construction of knowledge that occurs within a certain discourse. This object is constructed by all that is said about it in a certain culture and in a certain period, by the way it is described, explained, judged, classified, etc. (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 362; Meyer 2001: 15). In essence, discourse constructs objects, instilling them with significance and meaning in a particular social and cultural context. Discourse determines how people see things and creates a picture of their world and their outlooks, thus influencing their actions as well. According to van Dijk (1984: 13), prejudice is not merely a characteristic of individual beliefs or emotions about social groups. Such ethnic attitudes have social functions, e.g., to protect the interests of the in-group. The cognitive structures of prejudice and the strategies of its use reflect these social functions (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 21–22).

CDA scholars regard themselves as ideologically motivated and committed, and their research is a kind of intervention in the life of society and social relations. Many researchers from this school are also active in anti-racism, feminist, and peace movements, and so forth. They state their ideological intentions openly and supporth weaker social groups against more powerful ones. The quality of their research is not measured by “objectivity” and academic remoteness, but by preserving the norms of systematic, rigorous, cautious analysis that are accepted in all scientific research (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 371; Meyer 2001: 15).

CDA is not a school of linguistics or discourse research. While the stated goal of traditional scholars of discourse is to reveal and describe the linguistic system’s structure and laws, CDA scholars tend to argue that the academic description traditional scholars offer is sterile and has no social and ideological implications (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 371).

While analyzing texts and “linguistic events” requires some analytical method, it is a principle of CDA that it is neither based on, nor prefers, a single theory or a uniform analytical method. Instead, CDA offers a kind of toolbox for the researcher, a list of linguistic and textual characteristics that can be examined when one wishes to analyze a text critically (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 366; Wodak 2001b: 64).[[1]](#footnote-2)

## 3.3 Conceptual metaphor theory

Metaphor, as posited by cognitive linguistics, is the essential core of human thought and creativity. Since the language of politics is characterized by metaphorical themes, metaphors are a powerful tool for uncovering the essence of political thought. Metaphorical expressions nourish our worldview and shape our thinking and, in turn, our actual behavior (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3–6; Mio 1997: 117–126; Koller 2012: 25). Examination of the context of metaphorical expressions facilitates our understanding of such metaphors and the goals that they are meant to attain in a given communicative event (Ifeanyichukwu et al. 2018: 95–96). Metaphorical linguistic usages reflect how we perceive reality (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3–6; Mio 1997: 117–126; Koller 2012: 25). Lakoff (1991) took this idea a step further, showing that metaphors not only reflect our view of reality but also influence it. In January 1991, on the heels of the First Gulf War, he analyzed the U.S. administration’s political discourse and showed how the Bush Administration used metaphors to justify going to war. In so doing, he demonstrated how metaphor analysis can be critical in exposing discourse manipulations and normally hidden ideologies (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 368–369).

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri (2009; 2011), studying metaphors in Israeli political discourse, shows how they help to portray war as a normal part of life. Such war-normalizing metaphors aim to naturalize and legitimize the use of military power by creating a systematic analogy between war and objects that are far from the battlefield.[[2]](#footnote-3) For example, the metaphoric phrase “Golda’s Kitchen” was the popular nickname for the most intimate circle of Prime Minister Golda Meir’s advisers. This metaphor conceals a secretive and undemocratic decision-making process, even in security matters and other central issues. In essence, the “kitchen” metaphor hides what was often, in fact, a “war room” where Israel’s most urgent security matters were decided. According to critical discourse analysis, the use of such metaphors is manipulative and helps to depict war as a normal, mundane, and unsurprising state, as expected and reasonable as medicine or business. In this way, the metaphor masks the true, terrible, and violent nature of war. Such patterns of discourse, repeated time and again (by politicians, military leaders, academics, journalists, and internet commentators), help the public become accustomed to this abnormal situation. Similarly, these metaphors help leaders convince the public of the rationality and necessity of war.

For example, Tony Blair defended his decision to send British soldiers to the Second Gulf War, in 2003, by using metaphors of progress – the successful attainment of goals (in the future) – as opposed to metaphors of regression, which reflect the failure to reach goals (in the past). These metaphors mirror the choices faced by the Labour Party and its leader, Blair, and thus establish the expected party policy: always go forward. Blair was willing to accept nothing but progress, and presented himself as a strong and reliable leader who would not be swayed by difficulty or criticism (Semino 2008). The metaphoric description of a particular problem or situation reflects the speaker’s perceptions of it and establishes his or her preferred solution (Chilton 2004: 202).

In this context, the rhetorical power of metaphors of movement, widely encountered in political discourse, is worth mentioning. One example is the metaphor (Charteris-Black 2005: 54–152; Musolff 2004: 30) that depicts the European common currency (the euro) as a train that must progress at the same speed and in the same direction with all its cars in order to avoid derailment. This metaphor reflects a specific perspective that urges European governments to adopt a uniform monetary policy and act in complete economic harmony in order to ensure the success of the European Monetary Union). Musolff presents examples of manipulative rhetorical baggage evoked by metaphors. The metaphors that he discusses express hostility toward the language of immigrants in Britain, such as the description of roads in British cities as streets in Bombay or Karachi (Musolff 2019: 257–266) and Coronation Street as having been relocated from Britain to Pakistan.

# 4 Analysis and discussion

## 4.1 Topos

# Topos is a term borrowed from classical Greek rhetoric that literally means ‘commonplace,’ and refers to a standardized way of constructing an argument; an intellectual theme found in a ‘stockroom’ of topics. The speaker searches in the topos for persuasive rhetorical devices. The topos contains a treasury of social or ideological conventions that are meant to elicit the mental acceptance of a given topic by an audience. The topos is the ‘glue’ that creates a common denominator between the speaker and the target audience, based on a social consensus (Aristotle 2002: 28–32). If a leader, or speaker, who wants to be particularly effective addresses the nation, they must base their statements and appeal on what is commonly accepted by that society; in other words, on ‘the truth’ of the society, its ideological narrative, collective memory, and cognitive patterns (Gitay 2010: 135-136). A speaker who is concerned about the effectiveness of their speech must adopt the views of their audience (ibid.: 137). According to Perelman, the speaker must not start with their own truth, but with the accepted consensus of the public they wish to address. In other words, the speaker must make the consensus and accepted patterns of their audience as the starting point, because if they do not, they lose their audience (Perelman 1982: 21). According to Eco and van Dijk, it is advisable for the speaker to begin by adjusting to the views of their audience, and obviously not to mock or annoy them. The speaker must aim to connect with the audience and present the subject in a positive, noncontroversial way.

## 4.2 Classification of metaphors

Both single-word metaphors and metaphoric phrases were included when selecting metaphors. The metaphors were classified according to the field from which they were taken. The subjects that the speaker wished to address through the metaphors were examined, as were the metaphors’ rhetorical characteristics.[[3]](#footnote-4)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category of metaphor** | **No. of metaphors** | **% of total** |
| Natural phenomena | 12 | 0.2666 |
| Animals | 4 | 0.0888 |
| Trade | 1 | 0.0222 |
| Military | 7 | 0.1555 |
| Travel | 7 | 0.1555 |
| Supernatural | 2 | 0.0444 |
| Historical events | 3 | 0.0666 |
| Holy books and places | 6 | 0.1333 |
| Medicine | 2 | 0.0444 |
| Sport | 1 | 0.0222 |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

### 4.2.1 Metaphors from the domain of nature

Metaphors from the domain of nature exist in all religions. In the Hebrew Bible, for example, one reads “A person is like a tree of the field” (Deut. 20:19). That is, just as investing in a seed will yield a sturdy tree and excellent fruit, so is a child like a seed; investing in him will pay off when he turns into a stable adult imbued with values. In the Quran, we read: “We have handed the Quran to you [the Prophet Muhammad] for the deliverance of man from darkness to light,” i.e., from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

Arafat is particularly inclined to adopt transparent metaphors from the domain of nature because they are pointed, reflective of direct speech, and decodable with no need for deep thinking.

In examples (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5) Arafat uses metaphorical concepts associated with water and the movement of vast quantities of water, as in a whirlpool, a sea, and a wellspring. The metaphors in examples (1) and (2) represent the inability to break free of the cycle of violence and return to the negotiating table. They point an accusing finger at Israel for the impasse in the negotiations and convey a need for bold, frequent, steps to revive them. The metaphor in sentence (3) that describes Palestine as a “wellspring of love and peace,” implying that the Palestinian people always strive to resolve conflicts through peaceful means and negotiations, also expresses a willingness to renew negotiations on the Palestinian side. Notably in this context, metaphorical use of the concept of “flood” is traditionally encountered (as both a verb and a noun) in the context of migration, especially in defense of anti-immigration ideologies and processes. In example (4), the U.N.’s resolutions in support of the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel are likened to an ever-flowing spring. Just as trees require water to bear fruit, so the Palestinian Authority requires the U.N.’s recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people to realize their rights, to jumpstart the peace process, and to establish a Palestinian state. Example (5) pertains to the Israelis’ expectations from the Palestinian Authority after the Palestinians departed from Lebanon. The Israeli government hoped that its condition would be shrouded in fog, just like the sea, which symbolizes the unknown and loss.

**Examples**

(1) We drowned in a **whirlpool of violence and terrorism**.

(*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p. 1., col. 2)

The whirlpool is a metaphor for involvement in acts of terrorism. It invokes imagery of a maelstrom of dark colors that are associated with destruction and blood, like black and red. It is evident that this metaphor is charged with emotion.

(2) Our dream of freedom, independence, and self-determination cannot be fulfilled in a **sea of blood and tears**.

(*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p. 19, col. 6)

The sea is a metaphor for the many occurrences of terrorist acts. It invokes imagery of a bloodstained red mass without borders, like a sea. The metaphor is emotionally charged and is intended to deter violence.

(3) Palestine the blessed land, the cradle of culture and holiness and the **wellspring of love and peace**.

(*Al-Quds*, June 3, 1997, col. 8)

The wellspring is a metaphor for abundance, an inexhaustible source of love, peace, and adherence to the peace process.

(4) The U.N.’s resolutions were among the most important **springs** of support for the Palestinian people.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

(5) Israel’s leaders lived under an illusion and in a deceptive euphoria, as though, after the Palestinian’s departure from Beirut, the **sea** would swallow up the Palestinian Authority, and did not expect that such departure was actually a path back to the homeland, to the battlefield, to occupied Palestine.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

Israel began its military offensive in Lebanon on June 6th, 1982, occupied large portions of Lebanon and reached the very heart of Beirut. This attack was followed by a siege by land, sea, and air, which lasted for eighty-eight days, and the halting of all electricity and food. The Palestinian resistance was forced to leave Lebanon. Israel expected that the Palestinian Authority would significantly weaken and even disappear altogether after leaving Beirut so that its condition would be like the sea, shrouded in fog and unknown.

(6) Holy Jerusalem, **the gem of our land and our eternal pearl**.

(*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 4, 1996, p. 2, col. 5)

Jerusalem is described through images of precious stones. The metaphor invokes prestige and sublime splendor, a kind of supreme beauty that testifies to Arafat’s great emotional attachment to the city, and helps to justify his calls for Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state.

(7) Terrorism is trying to rewind the hands of the clock after the **sun of peace** has risen on a beautiful dream we called a “**new Middle East.**”

(*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p. 19, col. 6)

The phrase “the sun of peace” is a metaphor for optimal peace. The sun is an established literary symbol of success, and invokes images of positive energy radiating down onto a new Middle East, which is a political symbol of a new future in the region.

(8) We must keep the **embers of this dream burning** and protect holy Jerusalem, the pearl of Palestine, the flower of her city, and her beating heart.

(*Al-Quds*, July 2, 1998, col. 4)

The “burning embers” of “this dream” is a metaphor that describes a spark, the precious essence of the Palestinian dream. Later, the speaker creates metaphorical identifications with a fixed object and a shifting base: Jerusalem is likened to a precious stone to emphasize its grace and prestige, a flower to reflect its splendor and radiance, and a beating heart to convey its centrality to a Palestinian state, since the Palestinians view East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state.

(9) The U.N.’s resolution to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people was the most significant spring to have watered the olive tree that has developed **deep roots and branches reaching to the sky**, after we watered it with tears and sweat. This tree promises a **fruit of** **victory** over Israeli occupation and oppression.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

The Palestinian people’s status had strengthened following the U.N.’s recognition of their rights. It had become like a strong tree that formed deep roots in the earth and branches that reach far up into the sky. The acceptance of the Palestinian people with the fullness of their rights and the establishment of the Palestinian state are like picking the fruit. Arafat is certain that this moment will arrive, but its realization requires extreme effort and continuous sacrifice.

(10) The situation in our homeland can wait no longer. And here are the masses of our people, our children, carrying the **torches of liberty**, becoming martyrs for the cause of eradicating the occupation every day.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

Raising the torches reflects the victory ceremony and the transition from occupation to liberty. That is, the light of the torches is a metaphor for the liberation of the Palestinian people from the occupation and for the transition from occupation to liberty and from darkness into light.

(11) We extend our hand to the peace branch because it takes root in our heart from **the tree of the homeland and of liberty**.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

The Palestinian homeland and the Palestinians’ yearning for liberty are likened to a tree. Just as the roots of the tree are planted deeply in the earth, so are the Palestinian people’s homeland and liberty deeply rooted; they are, in fact, their own flesh and blood.

(12) The Israeli government fears the settlement of Palestinians in their homeland, Palestine. It fears the **scarecrow** that is called the Palestinian settlement.

(Interview with Arafat, 12.1.1980)

The Israeli government is afraid of the realization of the Palestinian’s right of return to their homeland. This fear is likened to a scarecrow that disturbs the sleep of this government.

### 4.2.2 Animal metaphors

Many different cultures played a key role in the “birth” of metaphors from the animal world. For instance, in the Persian language, they say “He is a fox,” and in English, “He is an owl.” These two metaphors have approximately the same meaning: wisdom and cleverness. However, the former connotes something somewhat negative because it implies employing cleverness for deception and cunning. The second, in contrast, connotes something somewhat positive because it implies employing cleverness for positive purposes (Rouhi and Mahand 2011: 253).

One can see the role of culture in the formation/composition of metaphor from the world of animals. This is crystal clear when we see how the same animal reflects different traits in different cultures. For example, the owl in Persian culture expresses something evil and is used to describe an evil person. The dog is well known for its loyalty in different cultures. There are animal metaphors used to praise a certain person given his positive qualities. For example, “He is a Lion” describes the bravery of a person. In contrast, there are metaphors used to mock a certain person and belittle his value. “He is a chicken” is a case in point. It describes a coward (Rouhi and Mahand 2011: 253).

Some of the animal metaphors focus on the external appearance of the animal itself. For example, “He is an elephant” is used to imply that a person is overweight/obese while “He is a lion” indicates bravery. People unanimously agree that the lion possesses this quality. This quality describes a type of people who possess bravery.

The metaphor “talons of the occupation” in example (13) emphasizes Israel’s extraordinary aggression and its adherence to its policies of occupation, like a predator mercilessly sinking its talons into its prey. The metaphor of the “young lions” in example (14) reflects stubborn resistance to the Israeli occupation and the extraordinary emotional strength that will ultimately be reflected in the victory of the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Examples**

(13) Jerusalem must be rescued from the **talons** of the occupation.

(*Al-Sha’ab*, March 16, 1998, p. 15, col. 5)

The phrase “talons of the occupation” is a metaphor that paints the settlers as predators with talons.

(14) Until a **young lion** unfurls the Palestinian flag on the walls of Jerusalem.

(*Al-Ayam*, May 5, 1999, p. 18, col. 3)

The phrase “young lion” is a metaphor for the best of the Palestinian youth.

(15) On the horizon, I see no chance of holding a conference in Geneva. And even if it does take place, the Israelis will **spit their drugs** into it…

(Interview with Arafat, 23.4.1977)

The Israeli government will attempt to interfere with the peace talks at the Geneva convention and poison them if and when they occur. That is, it will attempt to poison the atmosphere during these talks, and as such the Israeli government is likened to a venomous snake. The bad intentions of the Israeli government are like the venom of a venomous snake.

(16) There is greed on the part of the Israeli government to **devour** large parts of Lebanon, just as it has **devoured** significant parts of Palestine.

(Interview with Arafat, 12.1.1980)

The Israeli government’s ambitions to occupy parts of Lebanon, as it did in Palestine, is like a predator that mercilessly pounces on its prey.

### 4.2.3 Trade metaphors

The long ongoing negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israeli government can be seen as akin to trading activity, and as in any trade, there is profit and loss. Arafat expresses his disgust at the exploitative nature of the Israeli government in the negotiations, since it is unwilling to make concessions for the sake of achieving peace, while expecting the Palestinians to make such concessions, a position that renders negotiations fruitless and bellicose.

**Examples**

(17) The Palestinian people are the only ones **paying the price** of peace.

(*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 4, 1996, p. 2, col. 7)

“Paying a price” is a metaphor for making concessions that result in the loss of money or soul of the party making the compromises, since the Palestinians suffer from terrible living conditions and are willing to make far-reaching concessions for the sake of peace. This is in contrast to the Israeli government, which, although it desires peace, is not willing to make significant concessions to achieve it.

### 4.2.4 Military metaphors

The domain of war remains one of the most popular sources of metaphors in politics. This domain, in which political activities are perceived as war, is usually employed metaphorically for all types of human struggle and conflict (Ifeanyichukwu et al. 2018: 95–96). For example, the metaphorical expression “war on terror” has been an integral element of American foreign policy since September 11, 2001, evidently reflecting the principal American strategy for defense against terror attacks (Silberstein 2002: 1–17).

The metaphor “the army of unemployment,” in example (18) below, refers to the growing joblessness among the Palestinian population, which is a direct result of the Israeli occupation. The metaphor of “the alarm bell,” in (20), reflects the dangers of the uncontrolled Israeli occupation, which threatens to rebuild the Temple on Palestinian land in East Jerusalem. The phrase “old-new wounds,” in (21), is a metaphor for the ongoing pain resulting from Israel’s blatant disregard of the U.N. resolution. It emphasizes the constant disappointment of the Palestinians regarding the conduct of the Israeli government and especially over the implementation of U.N. resolutions. The phrase “strategic option,” in (19), suggests the willingness of the Palestinians to renew the peace talks at any time. The blood, in example (23), which represents the greatest sacrifice, the Palestinian’s constant risk to life in their war against the Israeli occupation, is likened to the most effective weapon against the occupation.

**Examples**

(18) 100,000 new workers are joining the great **army of unemployment**.

(*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p. 19, col. 6)

The “**army** of unemployment” is a hyperbolic metaphor by which to describe a large number of unemployed workers. The number of unemployed in reality is certainly less.

(19) Our principled, stable, and permanent hold on peace and peace talks is a **strategic option** from which there is no retreat.

(*Al-Quds*, June 3, 1997, p. 23, col. 4)

The phrase “strategic option” is a metaphor for a diplomatic act of negotiation.

(20) I will sound the **alarm bell** about the plot to build the Temple.

(*Al-Quds*, December 10, 1997)

The phrase “the alarm bell” functions as a metaphor for warning.

(21) And he opened many **old-new wounds**, especially relating to the implementation of U.N. resolutions.

(*Al-Sha’ab*, March 16, 1998)

The “old-new wounds” are a metaphor for bad political relations.

(22) Not only did the Camp David Accords fail to realize peace, with these agreements Carter brought **dynamite** into the region. Therefore, the U.N. must resolve the situation.

(*Al-Mustakbal*, April 22, 1979)

According to Arafat, the Camp David Accords reflect an Egyptian and U.S. betrayal of the Palestinian people. They are like dynamite, because these accords destroy the explicit promise made by the U.N. and by the U.S. Administration concerning the rights of the Palestinian people to an independent state. Additionally, Arafat sees these accords as a conspiracy against the Arab Nation more generally, from the ocean to the gulf, because, in them, Egypt cared only about itself and neglected the Palestinian problem.

(23) I am honored to be one of the sons of this nation, who write the most impressive uprising against the Israeli occupation with the **blood** of its children, women, and men.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

The Palestinian people are not destined to suffer forever from the Israeli occupation. They are their own masters and can determine their own destiny. Writing, in this context, means to determine one’s own destiny. The Palestinian people sacrifice their blood in their war against the Israeli occupation. The blood, which represents their willingness to make the greatest sacrifice, is likened to the Palestinians’ most effective weapon, which will eventually determine their fate.

(24) The Israelis have adopted a **scorched earth** strategy and we now have 6,000,000 Lebanese and Palestinians who were exiled as a result of Israel’s aggressive military operations.

(Interview with Arafat, 8.7.1979)

Exiling Palestinians and Lebanese people from their homeland is like scorching the earth.

### 4.2.5 Travel metaphors

Travel metaphors are very common and familiar in English. Travel destinations (Semino 2008: 81–82) are planned in the manner of stops that need to be reached. Therefore, forward motion reflects a change for the better, as in growth and success, whereas reverse motion mirrors failure and backsliding. It was in this context that we explained Tony Blair’s “journey” metaphor in the Introduction.

In the examples below, Arafat uses travel metaphors mainly to emphasize the threats to the peace process that are lurking on both sides, but especially those presented by Israel, as it is the Palestinian people who are under occupation by Israel, which has disregarded their legitimate and justified rights. The metaphors “dead-end street,” “delays and obstacles,” and “red line” serve to emphasize the clearly unreasonable conditions that Israel set for the renewal of peace talks with the Palestinians. These conditions create distractions and obstacles to the peace process.

The metaphors “burning the bridges” across which the “peace train” is traveling and the “terminus” at which the train is supposed to arrive resemble the metaphor that appeared in *The Independent* (UK) in January 1999: the European common currency (the euro) is portrayed as a train that must progress at the same speed and in the same direction with all its cars; otherwise, it will derail and shatter. The point is that the countries that adopted the euro need to coordinate and harmonize their policies if they wish to enjoy economic success. The metaphors “first stop [on the way to somewhere],” “peace train,” “bridges,” and heading in a “particular direction” reflect optimism for the renewal of the peace process, its revitalization, and the establishing of peace, despite the stubborn position of the Israeli government and its repeated attempts to create difficulties for the Palestinians so as to hamper the renewal of the peace process.

**Examples**

(25) The many, continuous **delays and obstacles** that this government places **in the way** of the progress of the peace process.

(*Al-Sha’ab*, 16 March 1998, p. 15, col. 6)

Delays and obstacles on the metaphorical road creating disruptions in the peace process.

(26) The peace process in the region is going through an acute crisis and has reached a **dead-end street**.

(*Al-Quds*, December 12, 1997, p. 19, col. 7)

The complicated situation or conditions that Israel creates for the Palestinians are difficult to overcome are a “dead-end street.”

(27) This day . . . should be the **point of departure** on the journey to committing to a great national, Arab, and global effort.

(*Al-Ayam*, May 5, 1995, p. 18, col. 3)

The “point of departure” is a metaphor for the beginning of a political movement.

(28) There are attempts by extremists on both sides to burn the bridges between us so that the **peace train** cannot travel over them.

(*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 2, 1996, p. 2, col. 7)

The “peace train” is a metaphor for the ongoing peace process and the bridge is a metaphor for a positive relationship between the two parties to the process.

(29) There is no escaping [the fact that] the peace train will reach its **final stop**.

(*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 4, 1996, p. 2, col. 5)

A “final stop” is a metaphor for the goal of peaceful coexistence.

(30) Today, we **walked** a good part of the way together in the direction of a Palestinian state.

(*Al-Quds*, December 31, 1995)

Walking in a certain direction is a metaphor for achieving a goal, i.e., a Palestinian state, which is perceived by Arafat as the objective of the peace process.

(31) Jerusalem is a **red line** . . . and there is no one among us who would be willing to give up a single speck of land from Holy Jerusalem.

(*Al-Quds*, July 2, 1998).

A “red line” is a road sign that advises caution or is an order to stop. It is a metaphor for preventing negotiations on a particular issue due to its extreme sensitivity.

### 4.2.6 Supernatural metaphors

There is a direct and immediate connection between a particular event and its meaning, e.g., animal tracks in a certain area indicate that a certain animal passed through that area. In the desert, certain signs are immediately understood by trackers, but non-trackers are unable to decipher these signs and understand their meaning. Beyond this, there are phenomena that are outside our daily experiences and the limits of our imagination, i.e., the supernatural.

The legends have it that the Arabs have three impossibilities: *Ghoul*, *Anqāa*, and *al-khel al-wafī*. The *ghoul* is a legendary creature/evil spirit or demon in Muslim folklore and fables. This creature is ugly, savage, and large. Its stories are told to frighten children. The *Anqāa* is a legendary bird/griffin that has a long neck and is feared by all due to its size and supernatural strength. The *khel al-wafī* is a soulmate who never abandons its friend in times of distress.[[4]](#footnote-5)

**Examples**

(32) The city of Jerusalem needs to be saved from **the ghoul of this spreading settlement**.

(*Al-Quds*, December 10, 1997, p. 19, col. 6)

The phrase “the ghoul of the spreading settlement” is a metaphor likening the settlements to predatory ghouls, who are famous in Arabic legends for eating corpses and mercilessly devouring anything that stands in their way. Thus, stopping the settlements and declaring war against them and the settlements is justified.

(33) I tell the Israelis: “Come make peace and move away from the **spirit** of war that has been going on for 40 years already.”

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

The vicious ongoing war between the Israeli government and the Palestinians is like a vicious spirit.

### 4.2.7 Metaphors Connected to Historical Events

### 4.2.7.1 Metaphors related to the Holocaust

### Arafat, who is seen by the Jewish audience as an anti-Zionist and even as a terrorist by some among them, uses the Holocaust narrative to point an accusative finger at the racism of the Israeli government. In fact, it sends a double message: empathy and solidarity with the Jewish people, as victims of the Holocaust, together with poignant criticism against them for their racism, hate, and trampling of Palestinian rights. Arafat does not directly compare the behavior of Israelis toward Palestinians to the behavior of Nazis, though he does mean to imply it. For Arafat, the moral of the Holocaust is that the Jewish people should stand beside the weak and the weakened, the oppressed and dispossessed, that is, the Palestinians as the victims of the victim. In spite of Arafat’s harsh criticism of the Israeli government, he presents this criticism in a way that is positive and noncontroversial for his audience: he does not throw his thesis directly at the audience – “you’re fascists, you’re racists.” Rather, he builds his arguments on what is accepted by the Jewish audience, that is on its social ‘truths,’ ideological narratives, its collective memory and cognitive patterns, and the concepts ‘furnace’ and ‘ghetto’ undoubtedly create solidarity among the Jewish people. He sought concepts with which the Jewish audience would identify, like ‘furnace’ and ‘ghetto,’ and there is no doubt that these concepts are the ‘glue’ that comprises the common denominator between the speaker and his audience, as is socially accepted.

In example (34), Arafat addresses the bloody conflict between the Palestinians and the Israeli government. This conflict is like the furnaces of the crematorium. In example (35), Arafat criticizes the Israeli government for carving up Palestinian land into small parts in such a way as to dissolve its geographic unity and the unity of the Palestinian people. Such division of the land is compared to ghettos. Arafat mentions the words ‘ghetto’ and ‘furnace’ in these examples as part of the Jewish people’s awful memories of the Holocaust. The mere mention of these words by a person who is considered a clear anti-Zionist and the absence of Holocaust denialism, even if this is implicit rather than overt, could build a bridge of trust between him and the Jewish audience. The implicitness of his appeal to the Holocaust is to be expected. It is inconceivable that Arafat, who is viewed as an anti-Zionist, would recall the Holocaust to express public support and empathy with the Jewish people as victims of the Holocaust, as this would paint him a traitor in Palestinian eyes. He is, thus, walking a very tight rope, and usually expresses his solidarity with the Jewish people’s suffering during the Holocaust implicitly, or covertly.

**Examples**

(34) Let us make peace and move away from the **furnace** of this conflict.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

(35) Israel took over 58% of the West Bank, and what was left for the Palestinians is 42% of the West Bank, divided into cantons and **ghettos**.

(Dialogue with Arafat, *Al-Haram*, 12.8.2003)

**4.2.7.2 Metaphors relating to the Sykes-Picot Agreement**

(36) What is happening in the Middle East is a new **Sykes-Picot** that aims to prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and to prevent peace and stability in the region.

(Interview with Arafat, *Middle East Newspaper*, 5.10.2004)

**4.2.8 Religious metaphors**

When speakers aim to persuade, they may appeal to literary, religious and folklore infrastructure, such as songs, proverbs, parables, scriptures and myths that are accepted in society and culture. In the case of quotations from scripture, the ideas presented are self-evident, their truth requireing no proof.

**4.2.8.1 Metaphors related to religiously significant places**

The Black Stone is a stone that is found in the eastern corner of the Kaaba, which is at the center of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Muslims treat it as a holy Islamic relic, which according to Muslim tradition existed already during the time of Adam and Eve.

(37) I see the homeland in your **sacred stones**.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

Arafat attributes great sanctity to the uprising against the Israeli government. He compares the stones, as symbols of rebellion against the Israeli government, to the Black Stone in Mecca, and in so doing attributes supreme sanctity to this uprising.

**4.2.8.2 Quotations from the Quran**

The Quran is known, in Arab culture, as the paragon of Arabic language. Its style and language put to shame any attempt to imitate it. Its exclusive truth is sanctified with the seal of Allah. Its verses are considered to be truths that need no proof. Arafat harnesses verses from the Quran to his own needs and takes advantage of their somewhat magical influence upon his audience.

**Examples**

(38) I tell Israelis: “Come let us make peace and distance ourselves from the threat of wars, whose **fuel will be our babies and yours**.”

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

Arafat warns against the outbreak of wars, because these wars would be fueled by Palestinian and Israeli babies. He compares the fires that these potential wars between Palestinians and Israelis to the fires of hell and appeals to *Surah Al-Bakarah* (2:24): “…fear the Fire fueled with people and stones, which is prepared for the disbelievers.” It is clear that Arafat means that the Israeli government is heretical, because the vicious and brutal policies it enacts against Palestinians characterizes the actions of infidels. The end of the verse clearly shows that Arafat is threatening the Israeli government and warning it of the Palestinian response, which will be as severe as the fires of hell, if it continues in its brutal policy against the Palestinian people.

(39) I see the homeland in your **sacred stones**.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

**4.2.8.3 Metaphors from the Old Testament**

Arafat takes his audience to the Old Testament story of Noah and the flood. In example (40), he compares the Palestinian people to the olive branch, because it is peace loving rather than war mongering. Furthermore, the peace between the Palestinian people and the Israeli government is likened to the olive branch.

**Examples**

(40) The U.N.’s resolutions were among the most significant of springs to have watered the olive branch.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

We extend our hand to the peace branch.

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 13.12.1988)

In example (41), Arafat takes his audience to the moment that God freed the Israelites from their captivity in Egypt and before they entered Israel. During this time, they wandered the desert for forty years. The wanderings of the Palestinian people around the world and their suffering, from inhumane conditions in refugee camps in Israel and abroad, can be likened to climbing mountains and getting lost in the desert. Arafat’s meaning is that the Palestinian people suffer from brutal living conditions under the Israeli occupation, and are dispersed all around the world, just as the Jewish people wandered the desert for forty years and later left their homeland for all corners of the world. In fact, there is a common denominator between Palestinians and Israelis that is reflected in the fact that they have both suffered from wandering and from being far from their homelands. The expectation is that a people who suffered for forty years of wandering in the desert and during their long period of exile would have sympathy toward, and solidarity with, the Palestinians, but what actually happens is the exact opposite.

(41) How many times have our people, women, children, and the elderly, been forced to leave their homeland with no food or water and forced **to climb mountains and wander in the desert.**

(Arafat’s speech to the U.N., 1974)

**4.2.8.3 Metaphors related to the Myth of the “Few against the Many”**

“The few against the many” is a mythical expression that captures a deeply-rooted outlook in Israeli culture. Its basis is theological, reflecting Biblical references to the Israelite wars in which the balance of power favored the enemy, but also relating to the events celebrated in Hanukkah, to the War of Independence, and others. It relates to the balance of power during the Hasmonaean rebellion under Judah Maccabi (167–160 BCE). The expression “few against many,” is engraved in the Israeli public consciousness, and refers to the story of the festival in which Judah Maccabi and his rebel army, which suffered from numerical inferiority and an undersupply of weaponry and munitions, defeated the Seleucid (usually called Greek) army, flush with soldiers and armaments, on the battlefield, in their struggle against enslavement by the Seleucid empire and its supporters in the Land of Israel.

(42) The children of the stones confront the Israeli occupier, who is equipped with advanced fighter planes, tanks, and other advanced weapons of destruction, and in so doing bring back to memory the iron image of the **lone unarmed David** confronting **Goliath, armed from head to toe**.

The children of the stones confront the Israeli occupier. They confront planes and tanks, risking their lives, and they do not give up. They are like the Israeli David, who was a shepherd. Despite the fact that Goliath, the Philistine giant, was armed from head to toe with offensive weaponry, like a spear, a warrior’s shield, a sword, a copper javelin, etc., and despite his immense height, David overcame him with no offensive tools at all. He merely used a stone, which he threw directly at Goliath’s forehead, killed him, and then beheaded him.

Before the battle, Goliath mocks David’s clothes and weaponry, and claims that David will be defeated in battle. In contrast, David insists that he will be victorious, because he is the messenger of God. And, through this battle, the greatness of God will become evident to all, because it is not by his own strength that he will be victorious, but through the strength of God.

Arafat relies on the myth of “the few against the many,” which is deeply entrenched in Israeli culture, and transports his audience to this biblical situation (in Samuel 1, chapters 17 and 18). This situation reflects a clear victory of the few over the many, of justice over evil, of paucity over affluence, and thus emphasizes that despite the obvious military superiority of the Israeli government, with its advanced tools of destruction, the Palestinian people will be victorious because of their moral superiority, because their rights to an independent state and to the return of the occupied territories are justified.

There is a reason that Arafat choses a biblical story. His purpose is to emphasize that in the bible – the sacred book of the Jewish people – which reflects the word of God and of the prophets, solid proof can be found that, in the end, justice prevails over military might. Israel’s many wars, in which the Jewish people confronted much larger armies and yet prevailed because justice was on their side, are solid proof that the Palestinian people will be victorious in their battle against the Israeli government because of their moral superiority.

**4.2.9 Metaphors from medicine**

Sometimes, the purpose of appealing to metaphors from the field of medicine is to encourage the patient to overcome some specific disease, as is the case with the metaphor of the “rearview mirror.” This metaphor articulates how recovery and the process of detoxification from drugs and alcohol require us to learn from our past mistakes and regrets, but not to dwell on them. If you drive and place all your attention on what is behind you, you will become stuck and fail to move forward. In contrast, good drivers focus on what is in front of them, but also constantly check their rearview mirror. For Arafat, the use of metaphors from the field of medicine serve to describe the aggressive actions of the Israeli government against the Palestinians.

**Examples**

(43) Our region is now **pregnant** because of the many dangerous events that occur.

(Interview with Arafat, 14.12.1977)

The many conspiracies devised by the United States and Israel against the Arab Nation in the Middle East in general, and against the Palestinian people in particular, are akin to a pregnant woman, as they are numerous.

(44) Israel is planning an **abortive** war against the Palestinian people, and the United States is helping it in this war.

(Interview with Arafat, 21.10.1974)

Arafat appeals to a medical metaphor precisely to reflect a difficult medical procedure. The Israeli government is planning a war against the Palestinians with the purpose of crushing them and depriving them of their rights. Such a war is akin to an abortion, because its purpose is to suppress the peace process and to essentially bury it.

### 4.2.9 Sport metaphors

Given the worldwide popularity of sports, sport metaphors are likely to create common ground with the public and foster and strengthen common national sentiments. The former Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, for example, regularly relied on soccer metaphors in his 1994 election campaign, e.g., calling the right-wing camp that he intended to establish a “winning team” (Semino 2008: 99).

(45) There is no efficient solution to the problem of the Middle East without taking into account the number of Palestinians. This is not a number that we can **jump** over.

(Interview with Arafat, 14.12.1977)

Arafat rejects any solution to the problem of the Middle East that does not does not include a just solution to the Palestinian problem. The attempt by the United States and Israel to ignore the existence of the Palestinian people and to reach agreements with Arab countries in a way that ignores the Palestinian population is like going over the head of the Palestinian Authority.

## 4. How do the metaphors in Arafat’s political discourse create concepts?

Conceptualization of the target domain through the source domain is referred to in cognitive semantics as mapping. The source domain is mapped onto the target domain, but not the other way around. Thus, in the metaphor “life is a vessel,” we perceive the concept of life through the concept of a vessel, but we do not perceive the concept of a vessel by way of the concept of life. The metaphor “love is a journey” is based on the image of the road, and is reflected in many English-language expressions, for example: the lovers are at a crossroads; the lovers are at a dead end; their relationship has gone so awry as to have no way back; the lovers have come down a long, hard path, and the like. Each domain, source and target, has its own characteristics: the journey has passengers, means of transportation, a route, obstacles, and more. In loving relationships there are lovers, events, development, and so on. The metaphor links the characteristics of the source domain to the characteristics of the target domain: lovers are travelers, the course of the relationship is the route, the difficulties in the relationship are obstacles in the path, and so on (Livnat 2014: 124).

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (nature). The map from the source domain, **nature**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Nature | Target: Politics |
| The whirlwind of violence and terrorism | Involvement in acts of violence and terrorism |
| A sea of blood and tears | The many acts of terrorism that had taken place |
| The spring of love and peace | An inexhaustible source of love and peace, and a constant willingness to revitalize the peace process and adhere to it |
| Springs | The U.N.’s resolutions to support the establishment of a Palestinian state |
| The gem of our country and our eternal pearl | The supreme beauty, and the special and sublime status, of the city of Jerusalem |
| The sun of peace | A new future in the Middle East |
| The embers of the dream | The constant willingness and unfading ambition of the Palestinians to renew the peace process and achieve a lasting peace with Israel |
| A tree that developed deep roots and branches reaching up to the sky | The status of the Palestinian people after being recognized, and having their rights recognized, by the U.N. |
| The fruits of victory | The Palestinian people accepting their full rights |
| The raising of torches | The Palestinian victory ceremony and the end of Israeli occupation |
| Tree | The homeland and liberty of the Palestinian people |
| Scarecrow | The settlement of the Palestinian people in their homeland, Palestine |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (animal). The map from the source domain, **animal**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Animal | Target: Politics |
| The talons of the occupation | The settlers described as predatory beasts |
| Young lions | The best of the brave Palestinian youth who stood bravely in the face of the occupation |
| Venomous snake | The evil intentions of the Israeli government toward the Palestinian people |
| Predator | The Israeli government’s attempt to occupy significant portions of Palestine, as it has already done in Lebanon |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (trade). The map from the source domain, **trade**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Trade | Target: Politics |
| Paying a price | The financial and emotional losses of the Palestinian people |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (military). The map from the source domain, **military**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Military | Target: Politics |
| Army of unemployment | Huge numbers of unemployed people |
| A strategic option | Diplomatic act of negotiation |
| The alarm bell | A warning |
| Old-new wounds | Bad political affairs |
| Dynamite | The Camp David Accords |
| The Palestinian blood that was spilled in the war against the Israelis | The most effective weapon |
| Scorched earth | The expulsion of the Palestinians and Lebanese from their homeland |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (travel). The map from the source domain, **travel**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Travel | Target: Politics |
| Delays and obstacles | Disruptions to the peace process |
| Dead-end street | The complicated situation or conditions that Israel is imposing on the Palestinians |
| Departure point [of a journey] | Process of political upheaval |
| Bridges | Positive relations between the two nations |
| Peace train | The ongoing peace process |
| Final station | The goal of peace |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (supernatural). The map from the source domain, **the** **supernatural**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: The supernatural | Target: Politics |
| The ghoul of the spreading settlements | The phenomenon of the settlements |
| Spiritַ | The brutal ongoing war between the Israeli government and the Palestinians |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (historical events). The map from the source domain, **historical events**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: historical events | Target: Politics |
| Crematorium | The conflict between the Palestinians and the Israeli government |
| Ghettos | The Israeli government’s division of Palestinian land |
| Sykes-Picot Agreement | The United States and Israel’s policy toward the Arab countries in the Middle East and the Palestinian population |

The target domain (politics) is mapped by the source domain (holy books and places). The map from the source domain, **holy books and places**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: holy books and places | Target: Politics |
| The babies of Israelis and Palestinians | The fuel in the wars between Israel and the Palestinians |
| The olive branch | The peace-loving Palestinian people |
| The peace branch | The peace between the Palestinians and Israelis |
| The sacred stones | The Black Stone in Mecca |
| Climbing the mountain and wandering in the desert | The suffering of the Palestinian people from wandering and from inhumane conditions in refugee camps in Israel and abroad |
| David’s victory over Goliath | The Palestinian’s victory of Israel by virtue of their moral superiority |

The target domain (politics) is mapped by the source domain (field of medicine). The map from the source domain, **field of medicine**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Field of medicine | Target: Politics |
| Abortion | Depriving the Palestinian people of their rights and burying the peace process |
| Pregnant woman | The multitude of conspiracies devised by the United States and Israel against the Arab world |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (sport metaphors). The map from the source domain, **sport metaphors**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source: Sport metaphors | Target: Politics |
| Jumping | The United States and Israel’s attempt to reach agreements with the Arab world which ignoring the existence of Palestinians |

# 5 Discussion and Conclusions

Arafat tends to weave metaphors into his political discourse, metaphors conveying semantic power and force are used as a rhetorical strategy that serves his message. Arafat sees metaphor as a positive tool for argument. It is worth noting that all the metaphors analyzed in this article were intended to cast a spotlight on the suffering of the Palestinian people under a policy of occupation and settlement and to emphasize that Israel does not truly desire peace but rather an ongoing occupation and the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people. Additionally, these metaphors emphasize that Arafat adheres to the peace process, and is fully committed to it, while Israel imposes unreasonable conditions and creates difficulties for the Palestinians, as a condition for restarting the peace process, with the goal of preventing the peace process from ever starting.

Most of the metaphors gathered here relate to metaphors of holy books and places, natural, military, and natural phenomena. It seems that Arafat focuses on nature metaphors since they are relatively simple, easy to understand, and convey their messages clearly – in contrast to more complex metaphors that require in-depth thought to decipher. About half of the metaphors relate to moving water, such as the sea and a whirlpool, and express being caught up in acts of violence and terrorism, and distance from the peace process. In contrast, the metaphor of the “wellspring of love and peace” expresses an abundance of love and adherence to the peace process, and continued optimism for its renewal and fulfilment.

Arafat also uses metaphors relating to travel and transport, such as “a dead-end street,” “delays and obstacles,” and “a red line,” to emphasize the clearly unreasonable conditions that Israel has set for renewing the peace process with the Palestinians. These conditions create disruptions and obstacles to the peace process, and stall negotiations.

Arafat is voicing a dual message through the use of metaphors: empathy and identification with the Jewish people, as victims of the Holocaust, while at the same time harshly criticizing Israel for its racism and hatred of the Palestinian people. Implicitly and explicitly, he uses keywords, topics like ghetto and furnace, with which Jews identify, while at the same time loading them with critical content. Arafat studiously avoids direct comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany, although this is his implicit intention.

It is not for nothing that Arafat chose biblical metaphors. His purpose is to emphasize that in the bible, that is, in the sacred book of the Jewish people, which reflects the word of God and of the prophets, solid proof can be found that, in the end, justice prevails over military might. The victory of the unarmed David over Goliath, who was armed from head to toe, reflects the many wars of Israel, in which the Jewish people faced armies that were far superior militarily and numerically, and yet prevailed because justice was on their side. And this is solid proof that the Palestinian people will be victorious in their battle against the Israeli government because of their moral superiority. The story of David and Goliath illustrates the myth of “the few against the many,” which is deeply entrenched in Israeli culture. This story illustrates a clear victory of the few over the many, of justice over evil, of paucity over affluence, and thus emphasizes that despite the obvious military superiority of the Israeli government, with its advanced tools of destruction, the Palestinian people will be victorious because of their moral superiority, because their rights to an independent state and to the return of the occupied territories are justified.

One of Arafat’s most noteworthy metaphors is the metaphor in which he transposes the audience into the moment when God freed the Israelites from their captivity in Egypt and before they entered Israel. During this time, they wandered the desert for forty years. The wanderings of the Palestinian people around the world and their suffering, from inhumane conditions in refugee camps in Israel and abroad, are like climbing mountains and getting lost in the desert. He means to say that the Palestinian people suffer from brutal living conditions under the Israeli occupation, and is spread across the world, just as the Jewish people wandered the desert for forty years. In fact, there is a common denominator between Palestinians and Israelis that is reflected in the fact that they have both suffered from wandering and from being far from their homeland. The expectation is that a people who suffered for forty years of wandering in the desert and during their long period of exile would have sympathy toward, and solidarity with, the Palestinians, but what actually happens is the exact opposite.

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1. See, for example, Koller (2012: 19–38), where she presents a working model for analyzing collective identity in discourse, which integrates a socio-cognitive approach as a major strand in CDA. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See further in Lakoff (1991: 25–32). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. In this context, see Abadi (1988: 56–67). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Many people think that it is possible to find true friends, and this is not an imaginary concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)