**David Ben-Gurion’s Scare Rhetoric as a Device in Bolstering Jewish Fighting and Pioneering Spirit as Reflected in the Antithesis Reference**

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1. **Introduction**

One of the semantic relations in rhetorical structure theory[[1]](#footnote-1) is antithesis. Antithesis is a type of focalization that comprises an inferior or secondary statement—a satellite—and a main statement, the nucleus. The satellite and the nucleus maintain relations of irreconcilability, i.e., contradiction. The person being addressed feels positively about the nucleus, which in this case is the thesis. The reader’s understanding of the satellite, which expresses the rejection of a view inconsistent with the nucleus, amplifies his or her positive attitude toward the state of things in the nucleus.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The purpose of this chapter is to show how David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first Prime Minister, relied primarily on scare rhetoric as reflected in the antithesis relation in order to strengthen feelings of a fighting spirit, pioneering, and patriotism among young Jews generally and those in the service of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) particularly. The corpus on which the chapter is based is Ben-Gurion’s book *Tsava u-vitahon* (*Army and Def*ense, Tel Aviv: Ma’arakhot, 1955, in Hebrew, 365 pp.), from which all examples of the antithesis relation are harvested.

My assumption in this chapter is that Ben-Gurion relies on the Jewish collective memory to amplify the Jews’ fighting spirit, stressing that Jews have been a fighting people since the dawn of its history, endowed with unlimited psychological fortitude and able to withstand bitter enemies with heroism and extraordinary fighting spirit. It is not surprising that Ben-Gurion would stress that the IDF is not the Jewish people’s first army. The first Hebrew, the Patriarch Abraham, with whom Jewish history—political, geographical, spiritual, and religious—begins, also established the first core of a Hebrew army. This force, 318 men strong, waged the first war in Jewish history against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amrafel king of Shinar, and Ariokh king of Elassar, and defeated them near Hovah, north of Damascus (Ben-Gurion, 1954: \_\_\_).

It is also not surprising that Ben-Gurion would rely on the myth of the few against the many. This myth reflected the heroic victory of the small and poorly armed Jewish Yishuv (the Mandate Palestine Jewish population) over seven Arab countries that attacked it together with the local Arab forces. The sense of the few against the many had become ensconced among the Jewish inhabitants of the country since the outset of Zionism and, to a large extent, remains valid to this day. Notably, some trace its origins to the way Ben-Gurion told the story of the tiny Yishuv’s war against the Arab states’ onrushing armies.

The chapter invokes the tradition of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and shows how it can be used to analyze Ben-Gurion’s scare rhetoric as a device with which to bolster the fighting and pioneering spirit of the Jewish people as reflected in the antithesis relation. I will try to show how Ben-Gurion strove to skew and manipulate the political discourse in order to raise the soldiers’ fighting morale, promote ideological positions on Zionist pioneering and the Jewish people’s psychological fortitude, and, thus amplify its fighting spirit. He made this effort, as I will show in the article proper, in the belief that it would be the soldiers’ fighting spirit and faith in the justness of the war, and not the quantity of arms, that would ultimately determine the outcome.

David Ben-Gurion (16 October 1886–1 December 1973) was the primary national founder of the State of Israel and the first Prime Minister of Israel. He was the preeminent leader of the community in British Mandate Palestine from 1935 until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, which he led until 1963 with a short break betweem 1954 and 1955.

Ben-Gurion’s passion for Zionism, which began early in life, led him to become a major Zionist leader and executive head of the World Zionist Organization in 1946 (Brenner & Frisch 2003:184). As head of the Jewish Agency from 1935, and later president of the Jewish Agency Executive, he was the de facto leader of the Jewish community in Palestine and, to a great extent, directed the struggle for an independent Jewish state in Mandatory Palestine. On 14 May 1948, he formally proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel and was the first to sign the Israeli Declaration of Independence, which he had helped to write. Ben-Gurion led Israel during the 1948 Arab Israeli War and united the various Jewish militias into the Israel Defense Forces. Subsequently, he became lnown as Israel’s founding father.

Following the war, Ben-Gurion served as Israel’s first prime minister and [minister of defense](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense_Minister_of_Israel). As prime minister, he helped build the state institutions, presiding over national projects aimed at the development of the country. He also oversaw the [absorption of vast numbers of Jews from all over the world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah). A centerpiece of his [foreign policy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_policy) was improving relationss with the West Germans. He worked with [Konrad Adenauer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konrad_Adenauer)’s government in Bonn, and [West Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Germany) provided large sums (in the [Reparations Agreement between Israel and West Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reparations_Agreement_between_Israel_and_West_Germany)) in compensation for [Nazi Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany)‘s confiscation of Jewish property during [the Holocaust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust) (Lavy 1996: 45).

**2. The Holocaust in the Israeli Political Discourse**

Prior to the 1967 war, the Holocaust was not an obvious part of everyday reality in Israel. It was not taught in schools and was rarely mentioned in survivors’ homes. The decision by Egyptian ruler Gamal Abed al Nasser to close the Suez Canal and blockade the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, coupled with the feeling 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 only way of ensuring the Jewish people’s survival in Israel was a strong army. Israel would guarantee that there would never be another Shoah (Holocaust). Since then, almost every politician repeatedly uses the Holocaust in demands regarding the borders of Israel and its enemies and in all negotiations over the occupied territories under Israeli army control (Keren 2015: 173).

In the period between the 1967 and the 1973 wars, the Israelis’ sense of security regarding the country’s future and their feeling 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 (Keren 2015: 174).

In the wake of these wars, the subject of the Holocaust arose whenever there were discussions or arguments about the control of the territories. For example, plans to enter into negotiations were termed, “boarding the train to Auschwitz.” At the same time, strong criticism developed regarding the conduct of IDF soldiers towards 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 era (Keren 2015: 174).

The most important event, in term of the everyday use of the images and symbols of the Holocaust, occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century withs the Disengagement from Gaza in 2007. During this contentious event, Jewish settlers employed symbols from the Holocaust, such as yellow stars, and the security forces were referred to by Holocaust-era terms, including “Nazis” and “*Kalgasim”* (a derogatory Hebrew word meaning “troopers,” cruel soldiers of an oppressive regime). The settlers also stated 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 proceeding unstoppably. Plan. Here, a mixture of symbols from the Holocaust were used, such as yellow stars and terms from the period, such as “Nazis” and “Kalgasim” (a derogatory Hebrew word meaning “troopers,” or cruel soldiers of an oppressive regime) were applied to the security forces. The residents also articulated that they were Holocaust survivors or the children of Holocaust survivors and sought to advance this aspect of their identity as a reason for halting the Disengagement. Since then, the use of the Holocaust for every political purpose has been unstoppable. 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 on Israel’s left have criticized the Israeli political culture’s emphasis 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 towards 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 & 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 ghettoes, women suffering inequality, and so on (Litvak & Webman 2009: 325).

While no politician has based his or her entire campaign on Holocaust denial, a number have have used it when it was in their interest to do so. Croatian president Franjo Tudjman wrote of the “biased testimonies and exaggerated data” used to estimate the number of Holocaust victims, and in his book *Wastelands: Historical Truth*, he always places the word “Holocaust” in quotation marks. Tudjman has good historical reasons for doing so; during World War II, Croatia was an ardent Nazi ally, and the vast majority of Croatian Jews and non-Jews were murdered by their fellow Croatians, not by the Germans. Tudjman obviously believes that one of the ways for his country to win public sympathy is to diminish the importance of the Holocaust (Lipstadt 1993: 7).

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 7 D’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 of “the other, by, for example, dominating minority groups, excluding them from social activities, and even destroying and murdering them (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 22).

**3. Conceptual Frame**

**3.1 Classifying Speech Acts**

The most famous classification of speech acts was proposed by philosopher John Searle (Adam, Botwinik, & Aldo 2012, vol. 3: 259). Searle classifies speech acts according five groups:

A. Assertive speech acts—the speaker is committing to the reality of something. Examples include: describing, arguing, concluding, denying, confirming;

B. Directive speech acts—the speaker tries to cause the addressee to do something. Examples include: ordering, demanding, recommending, warning, asking;

C. Commissive speech acts—the speaker is committed to doing something in the future. Examples include: promising, threatening, proposing, agreeing;

D. Expressive speech acts—the speaker expresses his or her speaker’s psychological state. Examples include: apologizing, condemning, thanking, welcoming, offering condolence;

E. Declarative speech acts—the speaker causes an immediate change in the world. Examples include: declarations of war, names, court sentence, ban, marriages.

A sentence can contain more than one speech act, which can belong to different categories. For example, the sentence “Study hard for your exam!” might be an order, a piece of advice, or a threat. The sentence “Excuse me, I didn’t hear your name,” might be an apology, a request to the addressee to repeat his name, or both acts combined.

John Austin identified three types of acts that are present in every utterance (Austin 2006: 127-128):[[3]](#footnote-3)

A. Alocutionary act—this is the statement itself— producing certain sounds which have meaning. The locutionary act employs language to convey content.

B. The illocutionary act—the act that takes place when the utterance is said, namely, an action with the power to perform a certain act. For example: warning, reporting, apologizing, etc. The speech act is expressed in the illocutionary act.

C. Perlocutionary act—when a locutionary act, and hence also an illocutionary act, takes place, our words often affect others’ emotions, thoughts, and actions as well as our own. An extra-linguistic result can be caused through speech. This result is called a perlocution.

It is known that we can distinguish between direct and indirect speech acts. Direct speech acts are acts where the locutionary act testifies directly to the illocutionary act. That is, the content of the utterance directly express the speaker’s intention. Conversely, in an indirect speech act, the utterance’s content only hints indirectly at the speaker’s intention and the action heor she wishes to perform through the utterance. For example, the utterance, “I want you to pass me the salt, please,” is a direct speech act of request, while the utterance, “Can you pass me the salt?” is an indirect speech act of request. Indirect speech acts reflect what Searle meant when he said that speakers often wish to express more than they say (Livnat 2014b: 169-173).

### 3.2 The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Approach

CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that is used in discourse analysis. It focuses on how social and political power is created and maintained through language. CDA seeks to expose a discourse’s biases and manipulations that serve political interests and advance controversial ideological positions, and highlights 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 approach’s basic premise is that discourse has the capacity to shape social identities and establish relations between groups of people and individuals. Discourse can help maintain the social status quo, but it can also contribute to social change. The CDA approach focuses on the way 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. CDA seeks to understand, expose, and ultimately oppose social inequality (Livnat 2014, 2: 361; Hart 2010: 13–4; Wodak 2001a: 10; van Dijk 2001: 352; Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 32; Meyer 2001: 15).

The term “power” is the main concept in critical discourse analysis, the discourse mechanism being 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, Antonion Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu, and others who drew attention to the central role of language in constructing social reality. (Livnat 2014a, vol. 2: 361; Hart 2010: 13-14; Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 32; Meyer 2001: 15).

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 to talk about a subject or to act regarding it; it determines the accepted ways to talk 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 2014a, 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. Foucault and his followers argue that the connection between signifier and signified is far more complex than implied by semiotics: “a simple combination between an idea and the sequence of sounds that expresses it. 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. The 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 2014a, 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 Foucault, the discourse on mental illness and giving it a certain definition during the Enlightenment led to people with mental illnesses being incarcerated in institutions and mistreated (Livnat 2014a, vol.2: 362). 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 movements against racism, feminist movements, peace movements, and so forth. They state their ideological intentions openly and stand with 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 2014a, 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 2014a, vol. 2: 371).

While analyzing texts and “linguistic events” requires some analytical method, CDA on principle is neither based on nor prefers a single theory or a uniform analytical method. Instead, CDA offers a kind of tool box for the researcher, a list of linguistic and textual characteristics that can be examined when one wishes to analyze a text critically (Livnat 2014a, vol. 2: 366; Wodak 2001b: 64).[[4]](#footnote-4)

**4. Analysis and Discussion**

**4.1 Bolstering the Jewish Collective Fighting and Pioneering Spirit as Reflected in the Antithesis Relation**

Ben-Gurion was convinced that throughout Jewish history, the Jewish fighting spirit had been the most effective weapon against the Jews’ enemies. Even as the mightiest fortresses succumbed to the battering of artillery, the spirit pulsling through the Jewish collective heart has stood fast against world powers and carried Jews to victory over their enemies. In his antithesis formulations, Ben-Gurion usually rejects vehemently the thesis that the quantity of weapons, the level of military technology, and the size of the army determine the outcome of a war. The thesis he strives to instill is that a person’s ability to withstand fire and death, to fight, win, and die hinges not only on his or her technical prowess and professional knowledge but also, and largely, on his or her throbbing spirit within.

The numerically small Jewish people, outnumbered among the nations throughout history, cannot rely solely on military and power because, if it attempts to do so, it will face larger and more powerful armies. It must rely on its throbbing inner fighting spirit because it is this that has preserved it, enabled it to defeat its enemies throughout its history, and allowed the third Jewish commonwealth to come into being. In the War of Independence, the Jews defeated their enemies neither by having more weapons nor by having more people. Rather, they overcame their the enemies through moral and intellectual advantage.

Fighting and pioneering spirit, Ben-Gurion stresses, are not for special individuals and prodigies only. They are imbued in every individual’s psyche. The Jewish people is graced with the ability to empower and maximize its innate fighting spirit. In all of its wars in history, its will and its fighting spirit attained peak levels, allowing it not to submit to its enemies’ will. In addition, no struggle of ideas has ever been decided by armed force; it is spirit that triumphs and the Jewish spirit does not lie; four millennia of Jewish history are witnesses to this. Ben-Gurion proudly affirms the abilities, fighting spirit, and mental fortitude of the Jewish people. Not only mighty powers, he stresses, can light humanity’s path toward scientific, social, and spiritual progress; small peoples such as the Jews can do the same. In view of tis lengthy life experience, the Jewish people has no reason to nullify itself before the titans and tyrants of the world.

Ben-Gurion urges all soldiers to envision themselves, in certain situations, as the sole determinants of the outcome of the war and states that, in the absence of an explicit order or if the situation breaks down, each individual should see him or herself as a supreme commander, planner, and implementer. To attain such a level of responsibility, the soldier’s fighting and pioneering spirit must be at its very highest, of course. As proof of the Jewish fighting spirit, Ben-Gurion dismisses the view that all Middle Eastern and North African peoples accepted the new faith of Islam, some willingly and others under duress. Only one people withstood that mighty tide: the Jewish people. Therefore, the Jewish people should not consider itself inferior because its abilities and uniquenesses in no way fall short of those of any other people. The Jewish people has proved that it never enslaves itself to reality; instead, it tests reality against its vision and does the utmost to bend reality to its will. Ben-Gurion invokes the highest level of obligation, that of defense. For this cause, the individual must give his or her all—not merely some of his or her money, time, or energy, but his or her self, his or her very life—a person’s most exalted gift, for nothing surpasses life. And when necessary, the homeland takes that from the individual too.

Ben-Gurion dismisses the argument that military service is a burden and speaks of service in the IDF—his own and his comrades’—as a personal example. In addition, he touts the advantages of serving in the IDF to whet the Jewish people’s motivation to perform this service, to elevate its fighting and pioneering spirit, and to imbue it with boldness and heroism. Ben-Gurion would not allow himself, he states, to entreat the Jewish people to serve in the IDF if he were not to serve himself. He contrasts this with his offspring, his friends, and even his best friends, who had not served. Ben-Gurion finds it odd to hear that serving in the IDF is an act of suffering. After all, soldiers receive bread, clothing, and a wage. They are given an education, acquire a trade, and learn to be strong, health, tidy, and respectable. They carry out a national mission for their people and their fighting spirit reaches its pinnacle, as does their pioneering spirit.

Ben-Gurion proudly declares that the Jewish people has been a psychologically fighting people since the dawn of its history. As proof, he stresses that the IDF is not the first Jewish army. It was the first Hebrew, the Patriarch Abraham, with whom Jewish history—political, geographical, spiritual and religious—begins, who established the first core of a Hebrew army. This force, 318 men strong, waged the first war in Jewish history: against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amrafel king of Shinar, and Ariokh king of Elassar, and defeated them near Hovah, north of Damascus.

By invoking the antithesis relation, Ben-Gurion stresses the importance of Jewish collective warfare against its adversaries. Thus he injects collective fighting spirit into the Jewish national heart and strives to implant it in the soldiers. For Ben-Gurion, defense is the initiative and concern of the collective and not of the individual; only if the entire Jewish people is maximally enlisted and participates will it withstand the perils that surround it from all sides. In addition, no weapon of destruction can surmount willful and spirited people who preserve and defend the sanctity of their lives and their labor.

Ben-Gurion appreciates female power in the army and rejects the argument, and even the thought, that women have no role to play there. Thus he boosts women’s fighting spirit and reminds them of women’s valor in the Jewish people’s wars. It is forbidden, he believes, to belittle the role of women in defending and building the nation and the land, since no Jewish future is possible unless women play a responsible and active role in all areas of life. The quality of heroism, he asserts, belongs not to men only. In both ancient and modern Jewish history, in the struggle against the White Paper and during the War of Independence, women displayed no less heroism than that shown by men. Statehood, too, could not have come about without the participation and enterprise of the Hebrew woman, and there was no important feat in the War of Independence in which Jewish woman failed to play a respectable and proud role.

Below are examples of the use of the antithesis relation to bolster the Jewish people’s fighting and pioneering spirit:

1. Ultimately, war is made not by the tank nor the cannon nor the warplane but by the person who uses and operates these means. And the decisive inner characteristic of the fighting person is neither muscular strength nor technical prowess—although these are rather important—but spirit (Ben-Gurion 1955: 63).
2. A person cannot possibly become a pioneer simply by the law demanding it. Pioneering wells up from within; it’s the spirit that pulses in a person’s heart. It is nurtured by initiative, example, and patience. Without the pioneering momentum of youth, neither a country nor a creative and fighting nation will be built (Ben-Gurion 1955: 164).
3. Fortresses did not pass the test when the cannon roared. But there is nothing like a living rampart of men armed with matter and spirit (Ben-Gurion 1955: 41).
4. If we rely solely on arms and power—mightier arms and power will rise up against us. It is our great spirit that has made us into an eternal people, sustained us and elevated us over our enemies, and enabled the third Jewish commonwealth to arise (Ben-Gurion 1955: 340).
5. A person’s ability to withstand fire and death, to fight, win, and die, depends not only on his or her technical prowess and professional knowledge but also, and largely, on his or her inner spirit (Ben-Gurion 1955: 41).
6. It is not necessarily mighty powers only that can light humanity’s path toward scientific, social, and spiritual progress; small peoples such as the Jews can do so as well, as ancient, medieval, and contemporary history proves. In view of its lengthy life experience, the Jewish people has no reason to nullify itself before the titans and tyrants of the world (Ben-Gurion 1955: 208).
7. No struggle of ideas was ever decided by armed force; it is spirit that triumphs, and the Jewish spirit does not lie. Four millennia of Jewish history are witnesses to this (Ben-Gurion 1955: 214).
8. In the State of Israel itself, one must never enslave oneself to reality; instead, we should test reality against vision and spare no effort to bend reality to will (Ben-Gurion 1955: 355).
9. Fighting and pioneering spirit are not for special individuals and prodigies only. They are imbued in every individual’s psyche.
10. The commander is responsible not only for the soldier’s military training but also for shaping the soldier’s spiritual image (Ben-Gurion 1955: 61).
11. A person’s value is not measured in privileges. What distinguishes the person is not the privileges that he or she enjoys. A person’s special advantage is his or her awareness of being obliged, and the highest level of obligation is defense. For this cause, the individual must give his or her all—not some of his or her money, time, or energy, but his or her self, his or her very life—a person’s most exalted gift, for nothing surpasses life. And when necessary, the homeland takes that from him or her, too (Ben-Gurion 1955: 261).
12. Military service isn’t suffering. I would not allow myself to entreaty the Jewish people to serve in the IDF if I had not served and if my offspring, friends, and even best friends had not served. What is this pitying talk? What suffering have we got here? What’s the suffering of a young guy who gives thirty months of service to his people and his homeland? Soldiers receive bread, clothing, and a wage; they’re given an education, learn a trade, and learn to be strong, health, tidy, and respectable. They carry out a national mission for their people—where’s the suffering? (Ben-Gurion 1955: 322).
13. The IDF framework must not be meant for settlement and building only. Within the military framework, young immigrants will get to know the language and the country and the young will practice building the wilderness and imposing control of the mighty forces of nature at sea and in the air (Ben-Gurion 1955: 228).
14. In the War of Independence, the Jews defeated their enemies not by having more weapons or by having more people. We surmounted the enemy by our moral and intellectual advantage (Ben-Gurion 1955: 294).
15. Every soldier and every officer should take the initiative in carrying out an order. He or she should act not by rote and to meet the exigencies of discipline but to attain the desired goal, meaning to win. All soldiers should envision themselves in certain situations as though the fate of the war depends on them alone, and, in the absence of an explicit order or if the situation breaks down, each should see him or herself as a supreme commander, planner, and implementer (Ben-Gurion 1955: 291).
16. We shall learn from all our teachers but shall maintain our independence. We shall neither segregate nor isolate ourselves. We shall maintain our connection with the larger world, connecting with but not accepting outside supremacy and not enslaving ourselves in any manner whatsoever. Independence comes from the heart, the psyche, the national will—and only from an inner independence does one attain and maintain outer independence (Ben-Gurion 1955: 210).
17. Our defense is based not only on a professional army but also on a fighting people, on reserves that are mobilized quickly when necessary (Ben-Gurion 1955: 171).
18. It is not true that all Middle Eastern and North African peoples accepted the new faith of Islam, be it willingly or under duress. Only one people withstood that mighty tide: the Jewish people (Ben-Gurion 1955: 199).
19. The Jewish people need not see itself as the finest of peoples but it has no reason to consider itself inferior because in its abilities and uniquenesses it falls no short of any other people in any respect whatsoever.
20. Just as this is not the first Jewish state in the Land of Israel, so the IDF is not the first Jewish army. The first Hebrew, the Patriarch Abraham, with whom Jewish history—political, geographical, spiritual and religious—began, also established the first core of a Hebrew army. This force, 318 men strong, waged the first war in Jewish history: against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Ariokh king of Elassar, and defeated them near Hovah, north of Damascus (Ben-Gurion 1955: 330).
21. All this physical and moral pressure from the Bolshevik regime in Russia cannot quell and extinguish the will that pulsates in the hidden recesses of Russian Jewry. This Jewish collective gave the Land, even after the Bolshevik regime in Russia took it over, some of the finest pioneering youth, and the initiatives of these young people in the Land attest to the suppressed ability of Russian Jewry and the will that pulses deep inside it (ibid., 205).
22. Not inanimate stone fortifications but a living, working, creating human rampart—the one rampart that is neither deterred nor harmed by the enemy’s instruments of destruction—can maintain the country’s borders. The most fortified building can be toppled and undermined with well-designed and well-equipped instruments of destruction, but no such instrument will surmount a people imbued with will and spirit who preserve and defend the sanctity of their lives and their labor (Ben-Gurion 1955: 77). The imperative of defense is not the individual’s cause. Individuals do not make their own war and do not make their own peace. Defense, perhaps more than anything, is the enterprise and concern of the collective (Ben-Gurion 1955: 166).
23. The State of Israel will not attain fullness out of nothing—not by preserving its security, not by developing its land, and not by gathering the far-flung Diaspora. Only if the entire Jewish people is enlisted and participates to a maximal extent will we withstand the perils that envelop us from all sides and make our state fit for the national resettlement (Ben-Gurion 1955: 360).
24. The IDF, in the State of Israel, was not created out of nothing. The preservation of Hebrew during the era of Ottoman rule, the Jewish Brigades in the First World War, the underground Hagana in the British Mandate era, the Auxilliary Police during the disturbances of 1936–1939, the military units and the Jewish Brigade in World War II, the strike forces (Palmah) established in 1941, which, like Hashomer before, combined agricultural and military training, the uprising movement and clandestine immigration projects during the White Paper period—all of these foreshadowed the Israeli Defense Forces (Ben-Gurion 1955: 360).
25. Neither the peoples of Europe nor those of Greece and Rome, nor their modern heirs, were the first to create paths through churning waters and develop maritime shipping. The great conquest of the sea, which, more than any other historical factor, fueled economic development and the expansion of civilization in the past three millennia, was the pioneering enterprise of Semitic tribes whose language was Hebrew (Canaanite) (Ben-Gurion 1955: 171).
26. Our security rests neither on fortifications nor on weapons nor on an army but on one thing only—the entire people, with its fitness and its total united and supreme effort (Ben-Gurion 1955: 123).
27. The prime calling of the IDF is the security of the state, but this is not its only role. The army should also serve as a center of pioneering education for youth in Israel, native-born and immigrant alike. It should educate a pioneering generation, healthy in body and spirit, bold and loyal, and trained to carry out the historical missions of the State of Israel from the position of self-actualization, building the homeland, and settling its wastelands (Ben-Gurion 1955: 140).
28. Those who fought our war of liberation did what they did not to put on a demonstration nor to garner fame nor to be written about in newspapers or books. They received a prize for their work, the greatest prize of all: neither decorations nor honors nor publicity. Their prize was what they did (Ben-Gurion 1955: 140).
29. Again I say: Our security rests not only on the army. Every settlement must be fortified, trained, and prepared to stand at the gate (Ben-Gurion 1955: 274).
30. The outcome of the battle depends not on the individual soldier—but on the whole, the collective act of the unit. No matter how brave, talented, bold, and enterprising an individual may be, no wisdom and valor will be there if his or her unit at large, or if the commander who heads it is confused and incompetent (Ben-Gurion 1955: 93).
31. It is not the framework that is important but its content. We will fill the structure of our army with pioneering, nation-building contents, and our security can rest on nothing but the nation, and we need to shape the image of the nation (Ben-Gurion 1955: 125).
32. Our comrades in the “Religious Front” cannot approach us in the name of the past and demand that we derogate the role of women in the defense system and the building of the nation and the land. We will build our future neither in the format of our past in the Diaspora nor in the format of our past thousands of years ago. Our future is inconceivable without women playing a responsible and active role in all areas of our lives (Ben-Gurion 1955: 129).
33. One cannot mobilize just anyone when war breaks out; instead, people must be trained first and everyone should be trained in advance, including the women (Ben-Gurion 1955: 131).
34. Heroism is not only a masculine trait. In our ancient history as well as our modern history, when we fought against the White Paper [and fought] the War of Independence, the women displayed supreme heroism, no less than the men (Ben-Gurion 1955: 267).
35. The creation of the Yishuv project that paved the path to statehood is unimaginable without the participation and initiative of the Hebrew woman. The women of Israel stand together with the men of Israel at the forefront of the state—both in the Knesset and in the Government. And the most important thing, what counts the most—the women of Israel carried out a vital mission in the War of Independence. There was no important feat in the War of Independence in which Jewish woman failed to play a respectable and proud role. (Ben-Gurion 1955: 265).
36. The strength of Petah Tikva in its first days, the strength of Hadera and Metulla, was not in the men only. Were it not for the heroism of the Hebrew woman, those villages would not have withstood the harsh struggle against the ravages of man and of nature (Ben-Gurion 1955: 274).

**4.2 Emphasizing the Myth of the “Few against the Many” and Bolstering Fighting Spirit against the Enemies of the Jewish People**

“The few against the “is a mythical expression that captures a deeply-rooted outlook in Israeli culture. Its basis is theological, reflecting Biblical references to Israelite wars in which the balance of forces favored the enemy, along with the contexts of Hanukka, the War of Independence, and others. It relates to the balance of forces in the Hasmonaean rebellion under Judah Maccabi (167–160 BCE). The expression “few against many,” engraved in the Israeli public consciousness, references 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 on the battlefield, flush with soldiers and armaments, in their struggle against enslavement by the Seleucid empire and its supporters in the Land of Israel.

By using the antithesis relation, Ben-Gurion notes with emphasis that it is the Jewish people’s eternal fate to confront the many. The Jewish people will never surpass or even equal their enemies in numerical terms. The world will not defend the Jewish people; therefore, it must withstand its enemies by its own strength or face annihilation. Power and numbers, Ben-Gurion stresses, have never been decisive in a struggle of ideas and the Hebrew people; “the smallest of all the nations” has no reason to fear the outcomes of any clash on moral and conceptual territory, even if opposed by the most aggressive and mighty of world powers. Ben-Gurion boosts the soldiers’ pioneering spirit, fighting spirit, and heroism by repeating over and over that it has always been the fate of the Jewish people, as a numerically small nation, to face off against the many. Just the same, it has never accepted the moral and conceptual domination of a “world” foreign power and has never prostrated itself in matters of society, science, the intellect, and culture before those who, by dint of their governing, military, or economic might, see themselves as the high and mighty judges of humankind.

The following are some examples of the antithesis relation that elucidate the myth of the few against the many:

1. We are few and we must withstand the many. And when we are few, we must train and practice—and when necessary, mobilize—everyone whom we have. The “world” will not defend us unless we fight for our lives on our own, and if we go down, so be it (Ben-Gurion 1955: 276).
2. We have not outnumbered our enemies and will never outnumber them; nor will we even equal their numbers. We have always stood as the few against many—and if we are attacked, we will have to stand as the few against the many again (Ben-Gurion 1955: 305).
3. Power and numbers have never been decisive in a struggle of ideas and the Hebrew people, “the smallest of all the nations,” has no reason to fear the outcomes of any clash on moral and conceptual territory, even if opposed by the most aggressive and mighty of world powers. The Jewish people, true to itself, will never accept the moral and conceptual supremacy of a “world” foreign power and will never prostrated itself in matters of society, science, the intellect, and culture before those who, by dint of their governing, military, or economic might, see themselves as the high and mighty judges of humankind (Ben-Gurion 1955: 206).
4. It has always been Israel’s fate to stand as the few against the many, not only since the day we went into exile but also when we were settled in our homeland (Ben-Gurion 1955: 14).

**4.3 Metaphors within the Antithesis Relation**

Metaphor 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 getting to the heart of political thought. Metaphorical expressions nourish our worldview and shape our thinking and, in turn, our actual behavior (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3–6; Mio 1997: 117–26; 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 (Agbo, Kadiri, & Ijem 2018: 95–6).

This chapter applies the cognitive theory of metaphor. One of the most influential works of the semantic cognitive school is George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s groundbreaking study on linguistics, which attracted worldwide attention and established the foundation for a cognitive theory of metaphors (2000). Lakoff and Johnson sought to examine the metaphoric nature of human cognition by focusing on our common, habitual, consensual metaphors. Their work makes it clear that metaphors are supremely efficient tools for shaping and creating thoughts. They frame the world for us. Without them, we cannot really think (Livnat 2014: 2:368; Gavriely-Nuri 2011: 91). Metaphorical linguistic usages reflect how we perceive reality (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3–6; Mio 1997: 117–26; Koller 2012: 25). Lakoff 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: 2:368–9).

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri (2009: 2011), studying metaphors in the Israeli political discourse, shows how they help to portray war as a normal part of life. Such war-normalizing metaphors aim to naturalize and legitimate the use of military power by creating a systematic analogy between war and objects that are far from the battlefield.[[5]](#footnote-5) 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 the critical discourse analysis approach, the use of such metaphors is manipulative and helps to depict war as a normal, mundane, and unsurprising state of being, 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 in the discourse (by politicians, military leaders, academics, journalists, and internet commentators), help the public to accommodate itself to this abnormal situation. In the same way, these metaphors help leaders to 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 thus he 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 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 2004: 30; Charteris-Black 2005: 54–152). 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: 257–66) and Coronation Street as having been relocated from Britain to Pakistan.

### 4.3.1 Classification of Metaphors

Our selection of metaphors includes both single-word metaphors and metaphoric phrases. The metaphors are classified according to the domain from which they are taken. The subjects that each speaker wishes to address through the metaphors are examined, as are the rhetorical characteristics of the metaphors.

|  |
| --- |
| **Metaphoric domain** |
| Metaphors from daily life |
| Nature metaphors |
| Metaphors connected to historical events |
| Animal metaphors |

**4.3.1.1 Metaphors from the domain of the human being and the human body**

The notion of a “body politic” took shape during the Renaissance and evolved into a conventional idiom. Anthropomorphosis is an important and very common type of metaphor. Metaphors that anthropomorphize may play an important role in developing a sense of national identity, harmony, and conflict mitigation. Examples of such metaphors are those associated with the nation-state and the “body politic,” such as “head of state” and “the health of the state.” The “body politic” metaphor remains in use in English and German in reference to the European Union as a confederation of states (Musolff: 83–114). Ben-Gurion also made use of such metaphors.

1. No UN resolution and no recognition by states small or great, be it de jure recognition by Russia or de facto recognition by America, will be there for us unless our arm is there for us (Ben-Gurion 1955: 40).

The “arm” is a metaphor for the effort, toil, and sacrifice that are needed to secure the Jewish people’s victory over its enemies. In Example 41, Ben-Gurion implores the Jewish people to rely only on itself because only if it sacrifices its blood will it overcome its adversaries.

1. The commander fails to fulfill his mission if he acts only by imposing fear and by force of command and discipline. The officer must earn the trust and love of his subordinate, and the subordinate should feel a caressing hand with a mother’s love (Ben-Gurion 1955: 267).

In Example 42, Ben-Gurion likens the love of soldiers to a mother’s love of her children. The soldier should feel a caressing hand with a mother’s love. Ben-Gurion believes that a mother’s love for the soldiers will enhance their fighting spirit and their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of victory over the Jewish people’s enemies.

1. I know of no reason why our army will not be one of the best of all the armies, if not the very best. If we will it—nothing will stop us from doing it and we will establish an army that will be a source of greatness and glory, a safe redoubt for the renewed State of Israel (Ben-Gurion 1955: 137).

In Example 43, the word “greatness” is a metaphor for the supreme and unmitigated willingness of the IDF. In Ben-Gurion’s mind, the IDF is capable of being one of the best armies in the world and a well-organized one as well.

1. Power and numbers have never been decisive in a struggle of ideas and the Hebrew people, “the smallest of all the nations,” has no reason to fear the outcomes of any clash on moral and conceptual territory, even if opposed by the most aggressive and mighty of world powers. The Jewish people, true to itself, will never accept the moral and conceptual supremacy of a “world” foreign power and will never prostrate itself in matters of society, science, the intellect, and culture before those who, by dint of their governing, military, or economic might, appoint themselves the highand mighty judges of humankind (Ben-Gurion 1955: 206).

In Example 44, Ben-Gurion likens the great powers that fought the Jewish people by force of arms to high-handed judges of humankind. The purpose of the metaphor is to engage Jewish people in self-advocacy and urge it to reject its enemies’ domination as it has throughout its lengthy history.

1. The tremors of Soviet Jewry for thirty years and more under the new regime prove that even the steamroller of the Bolshevik dictatorship cannot totally defeat the Jewish people—and if many fine Russian Jews lent the new regime a willing hand and even accepted the total demand that it made of them, be this willingly or under duress, the flicker of their spiritual selves did not ebb and their profound psychological bond with the Jewish people and the Hebrew homeland endured (Ben-Gurion 1955: 205).

In Example 45, Ben-Gurion likens the historical pressures brought against Jews to break their morale to a steamroller; thus he amplifies the strength of the Jewish people, which has rejected its enemies’ domination throughout its history.

* + - 1. **Nature metaphors**

1. Not inanimate stone fortifications but a living, working, creating human rampart—the one rampart that is neither deterred nor harmed by the enemy’s instruments of destruction—can maintain the country’s borders. The most fortified building can be toppled and undermined with well-designed and well-equipped instruments of destruction, but no such instrument will surmount a people imbuted with will and spirit who preserve and defend the sanctity of their lives and their labor (Ben-Gurion 1955: 77).
2. Fortresses did not pass the test when the cannon roared. But there is nothing like a living rampart of men armed with matter and spirit (Ben-Gurion 1955: 41).

In Examples 46 and 47, Ben-Gurion likens the soldiers of the IDF, with their fighting spirit and heroism, to a literal live rampart. With their willingness to sacrifice their blood to defeat the enemy, they are a true rampart that is unfazed by the enemy’s weapons of destruction.

* + - 1. **Metaphors connected to historical events**

1. The immigration to Israel of the Jews of the lands of Islam, ostensibly a poor and degenerate element that is bringing a cultural disaster upon Israel, emits a faulty and vulgar echo. This snobbish criticism is not only morally illegitimate but also without any basis in reality groundless (Ben-Gurion 1955: 304).

In Example 48, Ben-Gurion dismisses the claim that the Jews from the Islamic countries are culturally inferior to those from Europe. Such a claim is morally illegitimate and without any basis in reality; it resembles a cultural catastrophe.

* + - 1. **Animal metaphors**

1. Why can a young Jewish woman work in a government or a private office—and not in a military office? What is this monster with which they try to describe military service? (Ben-Gurion 1955: 169).

In Example 49, Ben-Gurion disputes those who find women unfit to serve in the IDF because military service demands intense, grueling physical strength. The metaphorical word “monster,” depicting the army as a monstrously frightening thing, reflects irony as Ben-Gurion mocks those who deem women unsuited for military service.

### **4.3.2 How do Ben-Gurion’s metaphors 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 astray 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 love 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 map from the source domain **the human being and the human body** to the target domain **politics** is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Human Being and Human Body** | **Target: Politics** |
| Arm | The Jewish people’s autonomous authority and its willingness to defend itself by itself |
| Mother’s love | Willingness to embrace and support the soldiers of the IDF |
| Greatness | The IDF’s supreme and unmitigated willingness |
| High and mighty judges of humankind | The great powers, which treat the rest of humankind condescendingly |
| Steamroller | The intensity of the pressure brought against the Jewish people for the purpose of defeating it |

The map from the source domain **nature**to the target domain **politics** is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Nature** | **Target: Politics** |
| A living rampart | The IDF soldiers’ fighting and pioneering spirit and heroism |

The map from the source domain **historical events** to the target domain **politics** is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Historical events** | **Target: Politics** |
| Cultural catastrophe | The claim that Jews from the Islamic countries are culturally inferior to those from Europe |

The map from the source domain **animal** to the target domain **politics** is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Animal** | **Target: Politics** |
| Monster | Portraying the IDF as a frightening entity from which women should refrain from enlisting |

**4.4 Scare Rhetoric and Justification of War**

Ben-Gurion uses scare rhetoric as a strategy to enhance the army’s willingness to attain the highest level possible, as it must in view of the present and everlasting mortal danger to the Jewish collective. Ben-Gurion vehemently rejects the argument that what happened to six million Jews in Europe cannot happen again to 650,000 Jews in the Land of Israel. Such a claim, he says, is foolish and divorced from reality. The enemies of the State of Israel will always seek an opportunity to annihilate it, and since the Arabs do have this aspiration, the IDF must be on the highestp alert. In addition, the Jewish people, Ben-Gurion warns, will have to face not political adversaries but Hitler’s disciples and, perhaps, mentors, who know one and only one way to solve the Jewish problem: total destruction. Therefore, the Jewish people must fend off this peril and sacrifice its blood in so doing.

Ben-Gurion entreats the Jewish people not to ignore, even for a moment, the fact that their neighbors, concocting plots against the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, intend not only to narrow the country’s borders, deprive it of its share in Jerusalem, rip away the Galilee, or tear off the Negev, but also, no more and no less, to wipe the State of Israel off the world map and uproot its Jewish population. Therefore, the Jewish people must not be complacent and satisfied with the conquests and victories that it has recorded thus far. The fitness of the army, its effectiveness, and its readiness for the redemption of the Jews must be tested.

Ben-Gurion warns the Jewish people against relying on UN resolutions. The Jews will have no UN resolution to rely on unless they rely on themselves by means of their “arm.” No UN resolutions will deter the enemies of the State of Israel, who are eager to annihilate it; only the might of the IDF, its mental fortitude, and its willingness to shed its blood for its state will accomplish this. Ben-Gurion stresses that despite the lip-service statements and proclamations of individual powers that are ostensibly connected to the UN and subordinate to its declared will, these powers actually act in accordance with their real or imagined special interests.

1. The magnitude of the offensive against us will determine the sacrifices that we will make. Ultimately, however, it is not these that will count. What counts is the test of will. This is the supreme test, after which there is nothing. Those who take their will to the highest level will pass the test and emerge alive; those whose will falters will fall en masse and face utter extinction—moral extinction, political extinction, and physical extinction. For this reason, everything should be harnessed to the contingencies of the war—not only physical manpower and economic strength but also all the mental and moral strengths of the people and each of its members (Ben-Gurion 1955: 25).
2. Let us not ignore, even for a moment, the fact that the neighbors, who concoct plots against the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, intend not only to narrow the country’s borders, deprive it of its share in Jerusalem, rip away the Galilee, or tear off the Negev, but also, no more and no less, to wipe the State of Israel off the world’s map and uproot its Jewish population (Ben-Gurion 1955: 357).
3. Morale will be decisive, but not if it is alone. Without training, discipline, mobile division, equipment, and artillery, and aircraft—morale alone won’t sustain us (Ben-Gurion 1955: 55).
4. If some of the Arab rulers are initiating a new war against Israel, what they intend is not only to narrow the borders of the state or even to revoke our sovereign independence but also, as Shishakli (the former President of Syria) said—and he’s not alone in this view—to obliterate the memory of Israel from this entire land (Ben-Gurion 1955: 303).
5. We mustn’t be complacent and satisfied with the conquests and victories that we’ve attained thus far. Our army has not yet finished its work, and each and every day we examine the fitness and effectiveness of this instrument for the redemption of the Jewish people (Ben-Gurion 1955: 58).
6. We will not pass the test until each of us realizes that the front is neither “there” nor even “here”—but inside each of us, that neither this or that kibbutz or point stands at the front but every man and woman, every teen and elder, every child and infant, and we are duty-bound to make a supreme effort that includes each of us (Ben-Gurion 1955: 26).
7. The great decision will come now, in the next few months, and it will go the way we want only if we don’t know any “there”—be it Kefar Etzion or some other village—only if the front reaches the soul of each and every one of us (Ben-Gurion 1955: 27).
8. We need to be totally clear about the enemy’s goal. This time it’s not an attack on this or that locality, on several localities, or even on the whole Yishuv. This time, the enemy wishes to uproot the “Zionist menace” that awaits Palestine as part of the Arab territories, and from the enemy’s standpoint, he understands this correctly (Ben-Gurion 1955: 28).
9. Don’t let anyone tell you that we’ve got time and if we don’t get the Negev now, we’ll get it later. That’s a foolish belief that evades the difficulties. To make sure the Negev will be ours in the future, we have to conquer it now (David Ben-Gurion, 1955, p. 33).
10. No UN resolution and no recognition by states small or great, be it de jure recognition by Russia or de facto recognition by America, will be there for us unless our arm is there for us (Ben-Gurion 1955: 40).
11. Not everything that was good under the Hagana back then will be good for us now and going forward. It’s a new situation, new conditions, and a different war (Ben-Gurion 1955: 40).
12. The Jewish people has a moral advantage in its wars against its enemies. It fights its enemies because it has to but it seeks peace and is different from other peoples that have imposed their supremacy in the course of history. It has never sought to impose its supremacy on others (Ben-Gurion 1955: 213).
13. Thousands of Israeli Arabs worked in army camps, served in the British Army, and many also received training in Arab countries. The danger that awaits, however, is not from the Arabs of the Land of Israel only. The element we will face is the armies of the Arab states (Ben-Gurion 1955: 19).
14. Let’s not be foolishly optimistic, and let’s not say that what happened to six million Jews in Europe cannot happen again to 650,000 Jews in the Land of Israel. I warn the Zionist Movement: do not indulge in facile optimism (Ben-Gurion 1955, pp. 19–20).
15. Let none of us smugly consider the annihilation of the Yishuv something that presumably lies beyond the limits of the possible, and let no one disregard the fact that such an aspiration exists among our Arab friends (Ben-Gurion 1955: 20).
16. The doctrine of violence isn’t a new invention and doesn’t belong to the German race only. It wasn’t just by gentle preaching that the Christian and Muslim religions spread across the globe. In the Middle Ages, Christian and Arab rulers in Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa participated in exterminating Jewish communities and populations in equal measure. In the Arabian Peninsula, there were large and prosperous Jewish settlements before Muhammad came along, and not a trace of them remains today (Ben-Gurion 1955: 20).
17. We must not place too much trust in the lip service statements and proclamations of individual powers that are ostensibly connected to the UN and subordinate to its declared will; in fact, they act in accordance with their real or imagined special interests (Ben-Gurion 1955: 21).
18. The Jewish people will have to face not political adversaries but Hitler’s disciples and, perhaps, mentors, who know one and only one way to solve the Jewish problem: **total destruction**. (Special words) And we will have to prepare for this (David Ben-Gurion, p. 23).
19. The question of defense stands in a totally different light now. And although you may think I’m painting things in bleak colors and intend to spread fear—I feel it my duty to advise you of the dangers that await the Yishuv as I see them (Ben-Gurion 1955: 14).

**5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have shown that Ben-Gurion relied on the antithesis relation as a rhetorical device for his messages. Thus he strives to enhance soldiers’ morale and make them more willing to sacrifice their blood for the State of Israel. It is the soldiers’ fighting spirit, Ben-Gurion stresses, that will ultimately determine the outcome and not weapons, since even the strongest fortress can be felled by roaring cannons and sophisticated weaponry, but fighting spirit, heroism, and pioneering cannot be dislodged.

Within the antithesis relation, we encountered the use of metaphors. By means of this rhetorical device, Ben-Gurion tries to promote an explicit ideology and encourage the Jewish people to adopt it, believe in it, and act on its basis: The Jewish people should rely only on itself because its real protective rampart is the human one, its “arm”; if this arm falters, the nation will be destroyed. In addition, the metaphors send further immeasurably important messages: the contribution of women to the IDF is no less than that of men; the IDF needs to be on top alert, with everything this implies, in order to defeat its enemies and the great powers who treat humanity condescendingly and apply steamroller pressure against the Jewish people in order to defeat it, and to refute the claim that the Jews from the Islamic lands are culturally inferior to those from Europe.

By means of the antithesis relation, Ben-Gurion stresses the myth of the few against the many and notes that Jewry has always been fated to confront numerically superior forces. The Jewish people will never outnumber its adversaries and will never even attain numerical parity. Unless it faces them by its own strength, it will be destroyed. Ben-Gurion stresses that power and numbers have never determined the outcome of a struggle of ideas and the Hebrew people, “the smallest of the nations,” has no reason to fear the outcome of a clash on the moral and intellectual playing field, even against the most aggressive and mighty of adversaries. Ben-Gurion amplifies the soldiers’ pioneering, fighting spirit, and heroism by repeating, time and again, the fact that it has always been the Jewish people’s fate to confront the many as the few; just the same, it has never accepted the moral and conceptual domination of a “world” foreign power and has never prostrated itself in matters of society, science, the intellect, and culture before those who, by dint of their governing, military, or economic might, see themselves as the high-and-mighty judges of humankind.

Ben-Gurion adopts scare rhetoric as a strategy to propel the IDF’s preparedness to the highest level because the Jewish people are facing, and will always face, the threat of extermination. Ben-Gurion vehemently rejects the argument that what happened to six million Jews in Europe cannot happen again to 650,000 Jews in the Land of Israel. Such a claim, he says, is foolish and divorced from reality. The enemies of the State of Israel will always seek an opportunity to annihilate it, and the Arabs do harbor such an aspiration; therefore, the IDF must be on top alert. In addition, the Jewish people, Ben-Gurion warns, will have to face not political adversaries but Hitler’s disciples and, perhaps, mentors, who know one and only one way to solve the Jewish problem: total destruction. Therefore, the Jewish people must fend off this peril and sacrifice its blood in so doing.

Ben-Gurion warns the Jewish people against relying on UN resolutions. The Jews will have no UN resolution to rely on unless they rely on themselves by means of their “arm.”. No UN resolutions will deter the enemies of the State of Israel, who are eager to annihilate it; only the might of the IDF, its mental fortitude, and its willingness to shed its blood for its state will accomplish this. Ben-Gurion stresses that despite the lip-service statements and proclamations of individual powers that are ostensibly connected to the UN and subordinate to its declared will, these powers actually act in accordance with their real or imagined special interests.

Hitler wasn’t altogether original in his attempt to obliterate an entire people. The small Armenian Christian people was slaughtered by the Turkish Army. Something like that happened again during the period between World War I and World War II, and again it was by Muslims, and again the victim was a small Christian people. But this time the Muslims were Arabs and the Christians were the most ancient Christian people of all: the Assyrians in Iraq (Ben-Gurion 1955: 20).

We liberated the Negev and the Galilee, the Galilee in full, the Negev in greater part. It is not enough to expel the foreign invader—we need to insert the Hebrew settler (Ben-Gurion 1955: 77).

Our security won’t be built on a professional army. Only if the entire people knows how to defend itself, its freedom, and its state will our security stand (Ben-Gurion 1955: 92).

The traits and uniquenesses that a person who contributes ought to have do not descend from heaven. They are acquired by dint of uninterrupted and indefatigable toil, diligence, devotion, and study, for one purpose and one alone: to serve faithfully and lovingly the supreme need of the state—security and peace (Ben-Gurion 1955: 93).

The outcome of the battle depends not on the individual soldier—but on the whole polity, the collective act of the unit. No matter how brave, talented, bold, and enterprising the individual may be, none of his wisdom and valor will be there for him if his unit at large, and the commander who heads it, are confused and incompetent (Ben-Gurion 1955: 93).

One doesn’t endure a battle by order, decree, command, and discipline only. One needs spirit, and unless every soldier knows that he has equal rights and obligations—he mustn’t be mobilized (Ben-Gurion 1955: 99).

Pioneering spirit is not for special individuals and prodigies only. It is imbued in every individual’s psyche. Each person has innate spiritual strengths and treasures, only a few of which come to light (Ben-Gurion 1955: 108).

We need to train a soldier who can act both alone and with others. The soldier should not be, must not be, just a passive cog who has no ability to act on his own within a large military machine. Partisan action played an important role in our war, too (Ben-Gurion 1955: 109).

It’s not just outstanding intellectuals who acknowledged the definitive military value of the unique spirit of the individual; geniuses of war such as Hannibal and Napoleon did so, too. And we need the spiritual edge more than any other army in the world does, because we are few (Ben-Gurion 1955: 106).

It is none of the army’s business to resolve ideological disputes. An army as an army has a different calling, its only calling: to defend our existence, independence, and safety (Ben-Gurion 1955: 118).

Three are neither prophets nor bums among us, and there is neither a superior nor a lowly race. Every Yemenite boy and every Kurdish boy and every Ashkenazi boy and any boy of any other ethnicity is capable of attaining the highest degree of heroism—if we treat him lovingly and faithfully (Ben-Gurion 1955: 57).

Discipline is needed not only in great matters—a combat operation, but also in daily affairs, in minding the minutiae and maintaining exactitude and order during training and elsewhere (Ben-Gurion 1955, pp. 38–59).

War among us isn’t an aim in itself and I consider war ghastly and accursed violence. We need war only when we are coerced. War and victory are but means to something else—and it’s that “something” else that will give us an advantage of steadfastness, freedom, equality, and peace—for the Jewish people and all the peoples of the world (Ben-Gurion 1955: 27).

(Scare rhetoric and enhancing fighting spirit)

We should concentrate solely on the war effort now—not because we are abandoning the vision of our peacetime lives but the opposite: because we remain true to it, unto and including death. And in its name and for its sake shall we make war (Ben-Gurion 1955: 28).

(Scare rhetoric and justification of war)

An army relies not only on quantities, equipment, weapons and training. Yes, without all of these there is no army, but they alone are not enough. The army’s principal weapon is its moral strength (Ben-Gurion 1955: 40).

(Justification of war)

We shall neither enslave ourselves nor recognize any foreign spiritual, ideological, and moral domination, just as we shall not seek domination over others. We shall walk down our special path by the light of our conscience (Ben-Gurion 1955: 213).

(Justification of war)

The Jewish people has a moral advantage in its wars against its enemies. It fights its adversaries because it is forced to, but it seeks peace and is different from other peoples that have imposed their supremacy in the course of history. It has never sought to impose its supremacy on others (Ben-Gurion 1955: 213).

Discipline does not take away from pioneering; it adds to it (Ben-Gurion 1955: 31).

1. Overall, our human material is in no way inferior to that of any other country. In its intellectual capacity, it surpasses that of our neighbors immeasurably (Ben-Gurion 1955: 14).
2. The question of security stands in a totally different light now. And if you may think I’m painting too bleak a picture and am trying to monger fear—I consider it my duty to alert you to the dangers the Yishuv faces as I see them (Ben-Gurion 1955: 14).

In this sentence, scare rhetoric and antithesis are invoked not explicitly but by allusion only.

1. Thousands of Israeli Arabs worked in army camps, served in the British Army, and many also received training in Arab countries. The danger that awaits, however, is not from the Arabs of the Land of Israel only. The element we will face is the armies of the Arab states (Ben-Gurion 1955: 19).
2. Let’s not be foolishly optimistic, and let’s not say that what happened to six million Jews in Europe cannot happen again to 650,000 Jews in the Land of Israel. I warn the Zionist Movement: do not indulge in facile optimism (Ben-Gurion 1955, pp. 19–20).

(Scare rhetoric)

1. Let none of us smugly consider the annihilation of the Yishuv something that presumably lies beyond the limits of the possible, and let no one disregard the fact that such an aspiration exists among our Arab friends (Ben-Gurion 1955: 20).

(Scare rhetoric)

7. The doctrine of violence isn’t a new invention and doesn’t belong to the German race only. It wasn’t just by gentle preaching that the Christian and Muslim religions spread across the globe. In the Middle Ages, Christian and Arab rulers in Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa participated in exterminating Jewish communities and populations in equal measure. In the Arabian Peninsula, there were large and prosperous Jewish settlements before Muhammad came along, and not a trace of them remains today (Ben-Gurion 1955: 20).

(Scare rhetoric)

8. We must not place too much trust in the lip service statements and proclamations of individual powers that are ostensibly connected to the UN and subordinate to its declared will; in fact, they act in accordance with their real or imagined special interests (Ben-Gurion 1955: 21).

(Scare rhetoric)

9. The Jewish people will have to face not political adversaries but Hitler’s disciples and, perhaps, mentors, who know one and only one way to solve the Jewish problem: **total destruction.** (Special words) And we will have to prepare for this (David Ben-Gurion, p. 23).

(Scare rhetoric) The words ‘total destruction’ reflect the choice of words that have semantic power.

10. I have heard politicians say that Jewish wisdom is redemption wisdom—I don’t understand these words. I feel that Jewish wisdom today is war wisdom, this and none other, this and only this. Without this wisdom, the word “state” and also the word “redemption” are devoid of content (Ben-Gurion 1955: 23).

(Scare rhetoric)

11. The magnitude of the offensive against us will determine the sacrifices that we will make. Ultimately, however, it is not these that will count. What counts is the test of will. This is the supreme test, after which there is nothing: Those who take their will to the highest level will pass the test and emerge alive; those whose will falters will fall en masse and face utter extinction—moral extinction, political extinction, and physical extinction (Ben-Gurion 1955: 25).

(Scare rhetoric)

We are being attacked neither as members of the Histadrut nor as members of a party, but as Jews (Ben-Gurion 1955: 49).

(Scare rhetoric)

Good versus evil

Our security will be based not only on strength—but also on a policy of peace and friendship with our neighbors (Ben-Gurion 1955: 75).

We are peacemongers, not warmongers. Our hand is always extended in peace, and we make war only to defend our existence. That is, we do not see war as a goal in itself.

A Jewish-Arab alliance isn’t a lovely slogan for a distant future—but a real and imminent possibility (Ben-Gurion 1955: 75).

Justifying war

We are peacemongers, not warmongers. Our hand is always extended in peace, and we make war only to defend our existence. That is, we do not see war as a goal in itself.

**Emphasizing discipline**

An army isn’t a mass of people who wear army uniforms and bear implements of war. Passion and willingness to fight aren’t enough, either. Without organization, training, and discipline, there is no army (David Ben-Gurion, p. 89).

Initiative seems to be the opposite of discipline because the army operates on the basis of orders at all levels and ranks, and the personal initiative of a soldier or commander seemingly contradicts discipline. But it isn’t so. There is no contradiction between discipline and initiative; instead, they complement each other (David Ben-Gurion, p. 286).

1. A person’s ability to withstand fire and death, to fight, win, and die, depends not only on his or her technical prowess and professional knowledge but also, and largely, on his or her inner spirit (Ben-Gurion 1955: 41).

**Analysis**

Ben-Gurion amplifies and attempts to awaken the sense of homeland, which had been buried and suspended among the Jewish people.

1. Mann & Thompson 1988: 243–281. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mann & Thompson 1988: 283. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For further reading on the subject, see (Livnat 2014a, vol. 3: 158-159; Adam, Botwinik and Aldo (2012: 257-258). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See, for example, the article by Veronica 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 Critical Discourse Analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See further in Lakoff 1991: 25–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)