

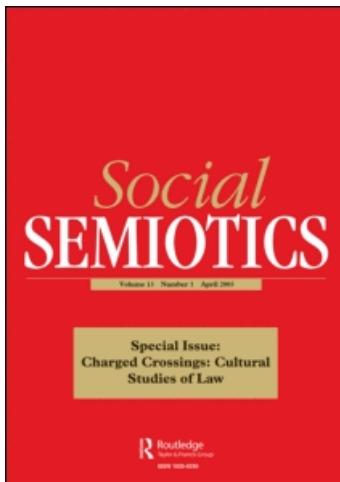
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### Articulating spaces: inscribing spaces and (im)mobilities in an Israeli commemorative visitor book

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Articulating spaces: inscribing spaces and (im)mobilities in an Israeli commemorative visitor book

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This article examines and conceptualizes discourse and space as these are ideologically enmeshed in and through visitors' entries, which are inscribed in a highly symbolic, commemorative visitor book. Building on recent theorizing in discourse and space-related fields, a re-materialization and a re-spatialization of discourse and discursive practices (inscribing, reading, etc.) is illuminated. Texts and discourse are rendered not as an "abstract sign system", but as occupying real life spaces, materials, and embodied practices. The article examines co-existing and overlapping modalities, through which spaces are discursively indexed, occupied, imagined and excluded, discussing notions of projected spaces and mobilities, authentic(ating) spaces, and embodied practices. Critical appreciations help shed light on the politically charged site of inscription under examination: a commemorative visitor book located in an Israeli war commemoration site in East Jerusalem. The critical-semiotic and multimodal analysis of visitors' entries reveals how spaces (of different scales), (im)mobilities and trajectories converge meaningfully on the surfaces of the visitor book. This convergence suggests that the book's inscribing spaces function as a nexus of meaningful action. The study employs methods and approaches that include and are inspired by ethnographic sensitivities, multimodality, critical discourse analysis and mobility studies.

**Keywords:** discourse; space; writing; tourism; material culture; national ideology; commemoration

#### 1. Introduction: articulating spaces

This article explores the interrelations between discourse, space, and spatiality, as these are embodied in and performed by a commemorative visitor book. The inquiry combines recent developments in a number of quarters in the social sciences, including the "multimodal turn" in the research of literacy and discourse (Jewitt 2009; Kress 2009), and a number of additional shifts (commonly labeled "turns"), including "the visual turn", "the spatial turn", "material culture", and so forth, the premise being that a comprehensive and integrationist approach to how social and discursive practices are pursued and how they accomplish meaning requires attuning to the intertwinement of modalities in contemporary social life. This requires acknowledging that while discrete conceptualizations are helpful on analytical grounds, an integrationist analysis of social interactions and their meanings

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necessarily calls for multidisciplinary approaches and their multimodal sensitivities and sensibilities.

Space is the main protagonist in the ensuing exploration. Socially produced, consumed, and made meaningful, space is viewed as a modality in otherwise inevitable multimodal social environments. Yet in as much as space is *a modality*, it is also *multimodal in itself*; it is “open” (Massey 2005). Divisions and distinctions exist not only between spaces and types thereof (big/small, public/private, exclusive/inclusive, imagined/concrete, etc.), but also between spatial modalities, which infuse the notion of space with multiplicity and heterogeneity (Massey 2005; Lefebvre 1991). Space is viewed as dynamic and progressive; more than a static “thing”, space is essentially malleable and processual. It is socially and interactionally accomplished and molded (see review in McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington 2009).

The interrelations between discourse and space were highlighted in poststructural thought, where a number of founding essays were devoted to the reconceptualizations of the relations between space, discourse and inscription (notably in the works of de Certeau, Foucault, Lefebvre and Perec). Addressing the essential correlation between spaces and texts, Derrida noted that, “even if there is no discourse, the effect of spacing already implies textualization” (Derrida 1994 in Massey 2005, 50). Poststructuralism attended to language and discourse centrally, so much so that to some degree the latter’s persistence and priority over other social features and modalities has paradoxically endured. Attending to this perpetuated bias, Massey (2005, 50) proposes that “texts are really just like the rest of the world”, which suggests the de-centering of text and discourse. Instead, discourse is viewed as one of a number of modalities that can and are used as resources in the production of meaningful social action.

The present research explores the ecological enmeshment of language with/in space. It seeks to re-materialize and re-spatialize discourse, and to re-open space in light of the above theorizing. An emerging interdisciplinary body of work in the fields of discourse and pragmatics conceives of space both as a resource and a social accomplishment. Various conceptualizations have recently been put forward, such as Scollon and Scollon’s (2003) “geosemiotics” and Harris’s (1998) “integrational linguistics”. McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington (2009, 1789) suggest that place should be viewed as “a site or network of mediated activities, where language, people, artifacts and technologies are entangled together”. Hence space is an emerging and contested performance, which always includes, as Massey (2005, 8) indicates, a “double articulation”: the interactional articulation *of* space, and simultaneously the articulation *by* space (of the agents producing it). This is of special importance when institutions, and related ideological discourses and spatial constructions are at stake. In these cases, the processual character of space, and the different modes of spatiality should be examined critically, for they become part of the everyday ideological mechanisms and practices.

With these notions in mind, the article will address the object of the visitor book. Visitor books are familiar objects, typically found in museums, galleries and hotels, where they offer places for visitors to sign their names and to write comments. Although they are potentially interesting discursive artifacts, they have not been examined systematically (but see Noy 2008, 2009). The aim of the present inquiry is twofold: it wishes to illustrate the merits of a multimodal analysis, as these are evinced in the inquiry of a somewhat common social artifact in the shape of a

museum visitor book. At the same time, the inquiry focuses on what turns out to be (when explored up-close via a multimodal perspective) a semiotically rich object, which, due to its interactional features and ideologically pregnant location, beseeches multimodal appreciation.

In what follows, spaces in and around a particular visitor book will be described. The inquiry will not be limited to the book itself, but will at the outset address the environment in which the book is located: the charged spaces of a national commemoration site and museum. Inside this environment I will conceptualize the visitor book as a social site in and of itself, which creates and projects spatialized social relations together with the spatialities within which these relations assume meaning. I will argue that the book under examination is not simply a “discursive device” (which should be researched via discourse analysis, after Stamou and Paraskevolopoulos 2003), but rather an *ideological spatial media* that serves as a *discursive emplacing device*: it constructs both physical and imagined spaces to which visitors to the site gain access and wherein they can position themselves (cf. Noy 2008).

## **2. Dual sites/multiple spatialities: the commemorative visitor book at the Ammunition Hill Museum**

The Ammunition Hill National Memorial Site (AHNMS) is located in East Jerusalem, Israel. Inaugurated in 1975, the site commemorates the Israeli soldiers who died in the battle of Ammunition Hill during the 1967 War (the Six-Day War). The site celebrates the victory of the Israeli army over the Jordanian army, and the “liberation” of East Jerusalem and the “unification” of the city. The complex comprises a large outdoor space, where the original trenches and bunkers in which the fighting took place are located, and a number of indoor spaces, including the museum, the offices, and the recently added Jewish Veteran Hall.

The Museum’s physical structure is half-sunken, dimly lit, and built of local stone. These features produce an impression of authentic war trenches, which recall the trenches and bunkers located outside, and create an atmosphere of somberness and remembrance. As the AHNMS and the museum are wholly dedicated to commemoration, they offer a typical “national-militaristic shrine”, which ideologically embodies Israel’s “cult of the dead” (Weiss 1997, 91). Many images of the battles over Jerusalem are presented, and the museum’s inner spaces are expectedly steeped in a venerated atmosphere created by a perfusion of symbols. Notably, the display consists of many discursive devices and exhibits that serve commemorative aims, such as the Golden Wall of Commemoration, where the names of the soldiers who died are engraved, a book-like device of which pages are made of large, page-like steel that allows visitors to learn about the soldiers, and soldiers’ letters, personal and war journals, autographs, and more.

The research visits I conducted to the museum took place mainly during the summer and autumn of 2006 (with a number of subsequent visits), and focused on the site’s impressive visitor book. During these visits I observed that the visitors generally consisted of three groups: Jewish Israelis on sightseeing tours in Jerusalem; Ultra-Orthodox Jews families from nearby neighborhoods enjoying recreation in the (then) free-of-charge premises of the AHNMS; and Jewish tourists/pilgrims, mostly from North America, visiting the Holy Land and Zionist national sites (these visitors

were usually on planned tours that were organized by the Jewish Agency, such as the Taglit or Birthright Israel Project, and similar organizations promoting Zionism). Hence, the visitors are exclusively Jewish, which “articulates” the site as an exclusive touristic ethnic space (Edensor 1998): located in Occupied East Jerusalem near Palestinian neighborhoods and a large Palestinian high school, the site’s exclusively Jewish visitors reaffirm its spaces as Jewish-national spaces.

A typical AHNMS visitor book is available for visitors’ use for approximately one year, after which the curator replaces it with a new volume and archives the older volume. During this time, about 1000 entries are inscribed in the book, mostly in Hebrew (66%) and in English (30%), with an overall average of 15.5 words per entry (cf. Stamou and Paraskevolopoulos 2003, 38, in which the average entry length in a visitor book located in an ecological nature reserve in Greece is around 13 words). All of the illustrations that are supplied below are taken from the volume that was compiled shortly before my ethnography took place, between July 2005 and July 2006.

I argue that at the AHNMS the visitor book is a semiotic device, which serves as a resource in creating symbolic and material (Jewish) spaces, where visitors’ collective identities can be performed. In order to appreciate how this is attained, the ways that the book is framed need to be addressed carefully. These framing cues supply the context in which the book serves as a multimodal medium where spaces, (im)mobilities and proximities are accomplished. Through these cues, visitors are made to understand what type of meaning-making device the book is and how it should be interacted with. But first, the larger physical environment(s) wherein the book is positioned need to be demarcated.

First, the AHNMS’s most valuable resource is the large outdoor spaces that it encompasses (of some 3.2 square kilometers). This is not as trivial as it may sound, as became clear to me during my first interview with the site’s (now former) director. As we strolled through the outdoor premises, the director’s account did not commence with the discourse of national commemoration, but rather by indicating “what a considerable urban space” is included in the site’s premises.<sup>1</sup> Before addressing the historic battle, the director talked about a different struggle – concerning the difficulties involved in *reserving and preserving a considerable urban space* in an otherwise built-up (or in the process of being built) urban area. The construction of the AHNMS was not without difficulties, but the result of a struggle where the protagonists were bereaved families on the one hand, and real estate contractors on the other.<sup>2</sup>

The site’s second spatial asset is its location, which is on the grounds of the historic battle in East Jerusalem. This unique location grants the site an invaluable aura of authenticity. After discussing the real-estate significance of the site’s spacious grounds, the director addressed the discourse of authenticity with these words:

You’ve got a place here where there’s *something* you can actually *feel* with your own [two] feet. [You can] move through the trenches. [You can] touch the bunkers. [You can] hear the stories. And people cling to that. This guy fell *here*, that occurred *here*.<sup>3</sup>

The production of this type of discourse highlights physical (sensuous) proximity, which is a distinct marker of authenticity. With the expansion of tourism destinations and attractions, this characteristic offers a crucial resource in terms of the site’s

distinctiveness and attractiveness; it complements the site's actual spaciousness, indicating that the premises are not an urban leisurescape but a legitimate site of national commemoration.

These points touch on the spatial framing of the grounds of the AHNMS. Moving into the spaces inside the museum, the framing of the visitor book therein is unique. First, atypically, the visitor book at the AHNMS is located *inside* the museum. While visitor books are usually positioned at the site's entrance/exit points, in this museum it is in fact located in one of the innermost ("sacred") halls, near the hall where the Golden Wall of Commemoration is located. Furthermore, the book is the *main exhibit* in the hall where it is presented (Figure 1). It is positioned in the center of a dimly lit hall, where a recording of a male voice is constantly heard, somberly reciting the names of the fallen soldiers and their military rank and affiliation.

The unique feature of the book's location inside the museum suggests that rather than offering a writing surface where visitors can simply sign their names and write feedback upon leaving the site (which is the typical function of visitor books), this book is framed so as to accomplish a different social function – one that concerns participation in a commemorative rite. Visitors are not expected to sign the book upon completion of their visit, but amidst it, in one of its most emotionally heightened moments. This function is further cued and augmented by the way that the book is presented. The book is located in an impressive installation, made of



Figure 1. Spaces within: hall, installation, and the visitor book.

heavy, black steel, which purposely resembles a monument (Figure 1). The installation's steel floor is somewhat elevated from the ground (visitors must rise if they wish to access the book), and two cylindrical-shaped columns arise from it. The book lies on a thick wooden platform, which is located on top of the truncated (left) column. These features lend the book an additional solemn and dignified appearance, designating it as a unique memorial display. Together with the location of the book in the museum's inner spaces, all these framing cues suggest a semiotic transformation: while the book has the appearance of a "visitor book", it is in fact a multimodal medium that serves a different semiotic function.

The semiotic transformation of the book's function, whereby it is made to be conceived as a ritualistic, participatory interface, is finally accomplished by the features of the device itself. The book is of an impressive and formidable appearance: it contains 100 thick and wide pages, which are made of parchment-like material, bound by a dark leather cover. Inside, on each page, four logos are printed vertically: the symbol of the State of Israel, the symbol of the City of Jerusalem, the symbol of the Israeli Defense Forces, and the logo of Ammunition Hill Museum (observable in Figure 2). These logos correspond with the large flags that are hanging in the hall, as well as with the plethora of national and military symbols that are dispersed throughout the site. The vertical arrangement of the logos corresponds with the aesthetics of both religious and national symbolism, which, from Gothic cathedrals to modern monuments, have verticality at their core (Azaryahu 2001). Hence, while "documents are composed in and of particular places" (as Laurier and Whyte 2001, para. 2.2 note), in the present case "place" is indicated not only contextually (by the environment) but also "from within" the document itself. This bears implications on the meanings that inscribing in this visitor book carries. It suggests that visitors' inscriptions join those already printed in the book in contributing to the museum's symbolically dense display.

### **3. Performing discursive spaces**

The depiction of the book's transformed semiotic function, whereby spaces are consumed and performed in and through it, concerns the unique ways that the book affords and offers space. First and foremost, I conceive of space in this context in a rather concrete sense: the area covered by the book's 100 wide pages (each 26 on 34 centimeters) amounts to nearly nine square meters. It is true that this space unfolds differently than other spaces (in accordance with the technology of the book), and that, as a result, the entirety of this space is not immediately available to view. Yet the point is that prior to the discussion of imagined and symbolic spaces, it should be initially acknowledged that the book is a *material device* that enfolds physical space. What crucially contributes to the spatial sense of this book's openings is the fact that (unlike other visitor books) these wide openings have no dividing lines or other directions as to where visitors should inscribe their entries (see Figure 2). In this sense, the openings function as both *a part and an extension* of the spaces of the museum, which are not restricted or pre-arranged in terms of visitors' activities therein.

Since the site's outdoor and indoor spaces are dense with national and military symbolism, visitors' entries inside the book expectedly echo this symbolic denseness in a number of ways. Discursively, many of the book's entries (re)cite verbal idioms, taken from the nation's arsenal of ceremonial, sacred vocabulary: "May Their

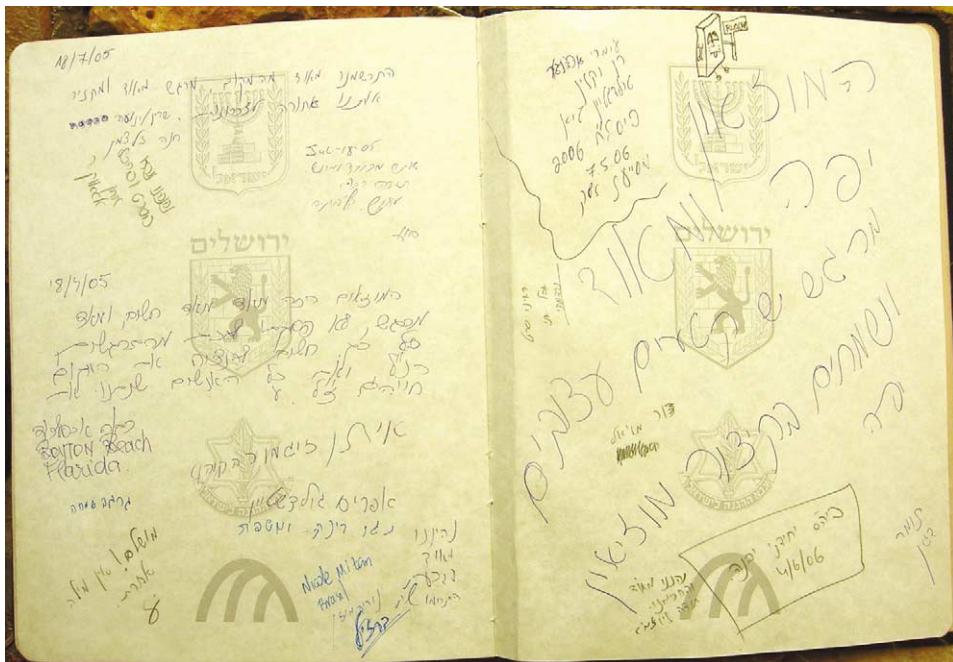


Figure 2. (Re)citing idioms: verbal and graphic symbols on the book's surfaces.

Memory Be a Blessing" (*Ye'hi Zixram Barux*) and "Next Year in Jerusalem" (*Leshana Haba'a Birushalayim*) are typical illustrations. About one-half of the book's textual entries (entries that include texts on top of the signature), contain such idioms, which serve in tying the visitors' expressions to the symbolic-ideological environment wherein they are produced. In addition, since the AHNMS presents itself also as an educational institution, the visitors take the opportunity of inscribing in order to demonstrate what they have learned during their visit.

The ritual (re)citing of the dense symbolism in the book is accomplished also by *drawing graphic signs and images* of sorts. These range from simple punctuation marks (exclamation marks and ellipsis), through underlining and encircling of entries, to drawings (flags, symbols of military units, weapons, hearts, and flowers), resulting in that about 40% of the book's openings include at least one drawing, and *all of the openings* include various other graphic signs. These graphic signs and images join and augment the verbal idioms in creating situated articulations of a distinctive multimodal character.

As Figure 2 shows, the visitor book openings hardly present "pure texts", but rather a visually vivid space of inscription. Note that this is also partly a consequence of the inscriptions' orthographic qualities (which derives from their mode of production: handwriting). In what follows, the inquiry will resist the temptation to firstly interpret the entries' expressive content, and will therefore deal with their physical presence in the book, and with the spatial-semiotic possibilities that they entail. If logocentrism is de-centered and we address these inscriptions as traces, a whole semiotic landscape of visual, spatial, material, gestural meanings is revealed, which precedes and oftentimes acts as the affordances of various texts and themes.

Hence subsequent subsections will address the consumption and performance of spaces through verbal articulations, indexicality, and graphic expression, respectively.

### **3.1. Spaces inscribed/imagined: Jewish and Israeli trajectories and spatialities**

This section commences with exploring whether and how the entries in the book accomplish meaning prior or in addition to their expressive content. These questions are of course of a broader scope, addressing articulations in various sites where meaning is not limited to or synonymous with content. The point here is that in social interactions there is always more *social knowledge* that is performed than that which can be designated as thematic (“logo”). Commonly, media-specific knowledge is disregarded.

In relation to the visitor book, consider the opening presented in Figure 2. The entries that are depicted in the image are not abstract inscriptions; rather, they are *articulated, space-consuming signs*. They are the enduring spatial traces of the activities of signing in the book, which are acts that inhabit the spaces that are offered by this device. In other words, over and above the inscriptions’ expressive contents (be it textual and/or pictographic), their formulation in terms of the media of the book performs *in itself social meanings*. This emerges from the fact that these entries’ distribution and arrangement on the space of the opening should be appreciated as a collaborative (collective) accomplishment. One can only imagine how this and other openings would have looked, and how unintelligible they would have been, if the inscribers would have written their entries with no consideration of earlier entries (on top of them, for instance). As Mondada (2009, 1977) indicates with regards to collaborative interaction, “participants achieve their social and spatial convergence and conjunction”. This is why these entries present simultaneously co-presences and co-participation. Paraphrasing Lefebvre (1991, 26), who argued that “(social) space is a (social) product”, in the present context, where only Jews access these surfaces, at stake is a (national-Jewish) space that is a (national-Jewish) product.

As situated and spatialized articulations, entries in this book inhabit and perform two grids of converging spatialities (and temporalities). The first grid concerns the medium (i.e. the book), and the technical possibilities that are involved in interacting with it. The second grid arises from the discursive convention of signing the book, which requires that the name and place of origin of the inscriber(s), and the time of inscription, be indicated. Thus we have the physical qualities of the entry (be it large or small, located variously in the space of the opening – left/right, high/low, center/side, etc.), on the one hand, and the indication of the place of the origin of its inscriber(s), on the other. From a temporal perspective, there is, again, the time of the medium, which is interactional and which can be inferred from the position of the entry – since the writing in the book progresses from right to left (the script being in Hebrew), earlier entries are usually located towards the top right side of the pages, and the earlier the entry the closer it is to the beginning of the book. And then there is also the calendarial time of the inscription, as conventionally indicated by the inscribers (for instance, “4/6/06”).

Table 1 presents all of the entries in the opening depicted in Figure 2 (rows 1–15), and those in the opening that follow it (rows 16–29). Names of places and Jewish names (identities) are indicated. The table captures the conventional grid, where

Table 1. Jewish/Israeli places/trajectories.

Number	Place of origin	Name
1	—	?
2	—	—
3	<i>Infantry Combat Training School [Israel]</i>	<i>Support Platoon</i>
4	—	—
5	Yavne [Israel]	Individual School
6	—	—
7	—	<i>Sarin Linoa Hannah Zalsman</i>
8	<i>California</i>	?
9	—	<i>Matan?</i>
10	Boynton Beach, Florida	<i>?Axelrod</i>
11	—	<i>Eitan Zigman (Hacohen)</i>
12	—	<i>Ephraim Goldstein</i>
13	—	?Simha
14	Brazil	Nicole Mizan
15	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Nirit Mizan</i>
16	Melbourne, Australia	Mushkie Jarkowicz
17	Melbourne, Australia	Lea Waxbort
18	New York	Gitty Fern
19	<i>Maryland</i>	<i>Ed?</i>
20	—	—
21	Monsey, NY/ <i>Monsey, NY</i>	<i>Bat Sheva Fern</i>
22	—	—
23	<i>Brooklyn, NY</i>	<i>Tombach Family</i>
24	—	Yaakov Wrightman
25	—	<i>Avitan &amp; Bitan families</i>
26	—	<i>Natti Adler</i>
27	—	Mandy Isaacs
28	Ellicott City, MD	?
29	—	AAK

Note: Text originally inscribed in Hebrew is italicized. Square brackets are added to indicate geographical locations in Israel; — indicates that the name or the place of origin is not mentioned; and ? indicates a word that I could not decipher.

name of places and personal names are indicated verbally. It suggests a type of imagined map of Jews in Israel (the “Individual School” in the city of Yavne, or the “Support Platoon” from the Infantry Combat Training School of the Israeli Army), as well as of Jews and Jewish communities around the globe (Lea Waxbort from Melbourne, Australia). The table also illustrates that quite a few entries are non-standard, in that they do not have a signature or that their signature is incomplete.

Of the two socio-spatial grids that emerge from the book’s entries, the first (the one related to the medium) is *aesthetic*: it is immediate and visual, and concerns the appearance and arrangement of the entries in the space of the opening; the second grid is *inferred and imagined*, and concerns the local and global places that are referred to in and by these entries. The point is that both grids are essentially spatial and conflate unto each other in these surfaces; they are layered and conflating “formulations of place” (Schegloff 1972). In other words, through this book two

spatialities are performed, which arrest and present mobilities and trajectories of micro/macro relations; all this within the highly ideological context of ethnonational Jewish Commemoration.

Furthermore, in light of both the book's unique framing and in light of the nature of the unmediated interaction it requires (this medium does not support access from physically distant points), the names of places indicated by the visitors should not be seen as mere "representations" of (Jewish) hometowns on the globe wherefrom visitors came. Instead, I conceive of these as *enactments of (macro) travels and trajectories that culminate in/on the (micro) spaces of the visitor book*. The entries are *records* – traces and indications – of travel and of distances traversed. The names of places from which visitors originate are indications of trajectories and therefore also of accesses: they indicate at once wherefrom the visitors traveled and whereto they have arrived (which is the "here" of the visitor book), and the fact that they were able to do so. Visitors therefore need not explicitly write, "we traveled from Boynton Beach, Florida to AHNMS/Jerusalem/Israel", because both inscribers and readers know where the book is located and are familiar with the convention of signing therein.

Hence, the commemorative book serves as a node in a grid that depicts Jewish trajectories of two types: those of Diaspora Jews and those of Israelis – both of which *converge* in this physical space, where they are documented and performed adjunctly. The trajectories are drawn between two locations: the origin and the AHNMS, which plays a role of a symbolic-national *axis mundi* (center of the Jewish World). What emerges is a map-like representing device, which has Jerusalem at its geographical center-point and ethnonational Zionist ideology at its core. This map-like device is unique because it is *co-performed*: it is not produced solely top-down by geographical or cartographical authorities (the Bartholomew World Atlas), but by participation and collaboration between the institution and the visitors in a seemingly spontaneous (bottom-up) type of way.

This glocalized representing device does not present an apparent center, yet the framing devices inside and outside it make it clear that the center of this map – the center of the places and travels of Jewish people – is where the device is *located*, and where it assumes its role as national a commemorative monument. This is why there is no need to draw the city of Jerusalem in the book or to present its name in the center of each opening/page – markers of this place are already printed therein through the vertical logos and through the position of the book in the museum, the museum in the space of the AHNMS site, and the site within the city of Jerusalem (its Eastern, "liberated" part). A metonymic chain of ideologically charged spatialities is thus performed, where they are interlinked "vertically" – from the largest and most abstract, to the smallest and most concrete – which take the shape of the openings of the visitor book: the center of this grid is Jerusalem, which is the capital of the State of Israel (the global grid), and the State of Israel itself, which is in turn the "home of the Jews" (the local grid). This is a noteworthy symbolic accomplishment of a manipulated institutional nature, because both the centers of the Jewish world and that of the State of Israel are political and contested sites/spaces. Concealing this contested nature is precisely what the ideology of the AHNMS tries to establish, and it does so uncannily with the help of the device of the book.

While this is the general picture of the twofold layout of spaces and spatialities, there are of course variations, on which I shall elaborate briefly. Interestingly, a few

of the conventional indications of place in the book's entries include also indications of the name(s) of the visitor(s), such as "*Rachel-Jerusalem*". In these cases, personal (or group) identities and places are hyphenated and thus localized identities are performed. In other cases, where entries were produced by Israeli settlers who lived in the Occupied Gaza Strip before their evacuation during the Withdrawal Program (or *Hitaikut* Program, executed by the administration of Ariel Sharon, in August 2005), the place of origin was indicated as "*Former Gush Katif*" (*Gush Katif* is the Hebrew name of one of the Israeli settlements' area in the South of the Gaza Strip). Hence there is a political variation on the issue of place within the politics of Israeli colonialism, where places that do not exist physically are preserved or brought back into collective national memory via the pages of the book. A similar political (ab)use of the convention of signing the book is presented by an inscriber who indicates "*Gush Katif/Kiryat Arba (which is Hebron)*." Here again, names of places are highly charged and contested politically (and, note, this is done reflexively): *Kiryat Arba* is (like *Gush Katif*) a Jewish settlement, adjoining the Palestinian city of Hebron in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank.

There are more variations and subtleties in relation to places, trajectories, and identities, as these are spatially "laid out" on and performed through the commemorative grid of the book (for a more detailed analysis of these variations, see Noy 2008). The point is that there are always at least two locations that are performed simultaneously, and that identities can thus be emplaced via skillful interactions with this commemorative device.

### **3.2. Indexicality and the articulation of spaces and identities**

In this section I turn to examine more closely a few of the entries, focusing on indexical dimensions, and specifically on the way indexicality is achieved via addressivity structures, and how, through indexicality, spatialities (and temporalities) are accomplished as situated performances. I will argue again that, through inscribing in this visitor book, places and identities are performed.

Indexicals are linguistic elements that are crucial in attaining meaningful utterances. According to Peirce (1991), an "indexical-based" meaning of utterance refers to a representational relationship that conveys some inherent continuity – physical or other – between what is uttered (sign) and what it stands for or represents. Viewed traditionally, indexicals are linguistic and para-linguistic elements that are vital in contextualizing utterances or in tying verbal expressions to their place of articulation. Yet in light of the spatial turn in discourse studies, place and context cannot be viewed as simply given ("already there"), and in as much as indexicals point at places, objects, and persons, they also partake in the social construction of the same (Hanks 1992; Silverstein 2003).

Two entries are presented below (Examples 1 and 2). These entries are characteristic of two addressivity structures that are common in the book, where identities and places are indexed and thus *emplacing performances* are accomplished. While utterances' meanings always rest on addressivity structures (Bakhtin 1986, 95), addressivity is all the more significant in the case of the commemorative entries, where its place of inscription is highly significant, and where entries are addressed to (and between) various actors in the scene of national commemoration, including: dead soldiers, bereaved families, army generals, military units, agents of commemoration

(such as the AHNMS), and, last but not least, visitors. It should be kept in mind that this book is an *immobile medium*. It is both physically immovable and symbolically framed as a monument, and suggests to the visitors that the production of the texts is done in *precisely the same place* as where they are consumed (unlike most other inscriptions/texts, which circulate physically or electronically). Paraphrasing Latour's (1987) notion of "immutable mobile," the visitor book is an "(im)mutable *immobile*." The book is an immobile element in a network of mobilities, and unlike scientific charts (which were Latour's initial concern when coining the term "immutable mobile"), it is receptive to changes to some degree: texts are added but the printed symbols cannot be changed. In what follows, Example 1 is originally in Hebrew and Examples 2 is mostly in English. A backslash indicates an end of a line in the original layout. Hebrew transliteration (Example 1) and translation (Example 2) is supplied in square brackets.

#### **Example 1**

9.8.05/The visit taught us of the difficult battles [habikur li'med otanu al hakravot hakashim]/and of the high and dear cost we paid in blood [u'me'xir hadamim hagavo'a sheshilamnu]/so that today we would be able to stroll and live in Jerusalem [kedei shenuxal hayom le'histovev velix'yot birushalayim]/quietly and freely. [be'ophen xophshi veshaket.] It was very moving. [ze haya meragesh me'od.] Shaked Family. [mishpaxat Shaked.]

#### **Example 2**

Thank you for dying for our country./ What you did enabled me and other Jews/to be able to live in *Eretz Yisrael* [the Land of Israel]. /With great Respect,/ *D'Av, TShS'H* [Jewish date: 4<sup>th</sup> day in the 11<sup>th</sup> month in the year of 5765] August 9, 2005 Shira, NJ.

The differences between the structures of addressivity of Examples 1 and 2 are interesting and consequential. Before elaborating on these differences, some of the main points of similarity should be noted, which indicate that these entries present rather standard entries. First, both entries adhere to the normative structure of this book's entries, which includes date, signature, and a commemorative text. Second, and as a result, both entries refer to a continua of times and places. More specifically, the entries typically draw a temporal line between past and present, suggesting that past events, framed as sacrifices, render life possible and enjoyable in the present. Finally, both entries are characteristically composed in the first person (as are two-thirds of all the other entries), and notably in the plural form (with some variation in Example 2, which shifts between an individual Jew ["me"] and "Jews").

These similarities outline the standard code that concerns producing commemorative entries, and thus they grant the entries a performative status. The Shaked Family and Shira from New Jersey produced coherent performances, the nature of which concerns *the retelling of the site's national-commemorative narrative*, yet from the perspective embodied by the visitors. By the time visitors have reached the inner hall where the book is located, they had sufficient time to observe commemorative themes and genres (the many textual artifacts that are at display), to a degree where they can now produce them successfully on the book's surfaces, and competently accomplish acts of participation in national commemoration.

This is why it is of interest to examine the various performances that are actually accomplished in and through these texts, and the different spatialities and

temporalities that are indexed. Consider the entries' structure of addressivity, which is how their inscribers' identities are dialogically positioned. In Example 1, the addressee is the commemorating institution (AHNMS), and the topic is the visit. The latter is evinced in the beginning of the entry and in its ending, which refer to the Shaked family's visit ("The visit taught us ... It was very moving"). The addressee may be deduced from the topic indirectly, because the Shaked family is grateful for an *educational experience* ("taught"), in which information about the battle and the war was communicated.

In this addressivity structure there emerges a specific chronotope: Jerusalem, where the AHNMS is located, is mentioned, and the temporal-casual link between past and present unfolds in terms of the value of the historic battle, which has allowed people, such as the Shaked family, to engage in leisurely and touristic activities ("strolling" in Jerusalem).

The addressivity structure in Example 2 is observably different. The addressee(s) are stated explicitly, and are *the dead soldiers*, and *not* the institutional agents involved in commemorating them. The main theme too is diverse, and it is not the visit but the historic *sacrifice*. While Shira of New Jersey also echoes the casual line between the battle and present-day conditions, the chronotopic qualities of her performance differ: she is not concerned with leisurely activities or with the city of Jerusalem. Rather, she is referring to "our country" (defined in religious terms), which is The [Holy] Land of Israel. Note the code-switching, which is typically employed in entries produced by observant Jews who are visiting Israel (they appear in over one-fifth of the entries). Code switches are usually helpful in accomplishing various social and cultural actions, oftentimes having to do with marking identities (Heller 1988). Presently, Hebrew (Jews' holy language), is introduced twice: with reference to space – the state of Israel as a Jewish-scape; and with reference to time – the Jewish calendar. Shira's code-switching instantiates the unique chronotopic grids within which she located her-self.

To conclude, while Examples 1 and 2 are rather standard performances of participation in national commemoration, they differ significantly in terms of how the identities of their inscribers are emplaced in the spaces indexed by the Israeli discourse of commemoration; more accuracy, how their identities are placed within different geo-symbolic spaces, which they creatively index. For the local and secular Shaked family, spaces are concrete and near, and the activities of inhabiting them ("strolling, living") have an everyday sense to them. These characteristics are typical of entries that were produced by secular and traditional Israeli visitors, which present a mundane appreciation of the places and activities that are commemorated. For Shira, whose entry is representative of texts produced by Orthodox Anglophone Jews, the spaces that are mentioned are not of a concrete nature, nor are the activities that transpire in them (note the ambivalence between her gratitude for being able to live in the Land of Israel versus the fact that she is actually living in the United States – a kind of mismatch in terms of the spatial trajectories she indexes). The spaces Shira mentions are essentially religious and elevated. These are not everyday places as much as they are imagined spaces that often enmesh Jewish and national sacredness (see Noy 2008).

These differences illustrate the differences that Bakhtin (1986, 169) noted, between "small time" and "great time". With regards to the politics of space in Israeli/Jewish nationalism, these are the discrepancies between the local "small

place” of life’s hustle and bustle, and the mythic “large space” of orthodox (sometimes fundamental) Judaism (Gurevitch 2007). It is no coincidence that these differences surface at the AHNMS, for the site celebrates the Israeli victory in the 1967 war, which has been interpreted as either a national-military accomplishment or an occasion of divine intervention.

### 3.3. Drawing spaces

Finally, the analysis moves to the graphic signs that are contained in the book’s openings, which also both consume the book’s spaces and perform imagined spatialities, and are therefore part of the politics of (micro/macro-)spatialities of national commemoration. About 40% of the book’s openings include at least one drawing, and nearly one-half of the book’s entries (48%) include at least one sort of graphic sign. In some of the entries, graphic signs and drawings accompany the text, and in other entries the relation is reversed and texts hold only secondary significance. These findings are rather typical of national rituals, where iconicity and symbolism have shown to be rather pervasive (Schwartz 1982). These findings may also be accounted by a finding that emerged from the observation I conducted, which is that oftentimes these are children who actually do the writing in the book. And since children’s literacy practices are likely to include pictorial elements (van Leeuwen 1998), this factor too shapes the inscriptions’ highly graphic appearance.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate a few graphic and pictorial signs, inscribed on the book’s openings, ranging from decorated exclamation marks, through underlining marks and encircling lines, to drawings. Drawings typically include national, religious and military symbols, as well as hearts, flower and balloons, which serve to indicate the inscribers’ affection to the nation and the soldiers. Indeed, appreciating entries’ meanings in this case is not some much a matter of “reading”, as it is a matter of viewing or scanning images (Kress 2009). The analysis below addresses with detail an intricate drawing, which captures the bottom half of the page on the right and some of the left page as well (Figure 3). The drawing consists of a number of smaller drawings, and includes the Israeli national flag, arms (a tank, an airplane) and soldiers (small and schematic figures on the right, and a larger and detailed figure image on the left), buildings, and the inscriber’s name (inscribed three times). Together, these elements *unfold a pictorial narrative*, which tells of spaces and events.<sup>4</sup> The drawing’s analysis suggests a number of common themes that are expressed via images, together with the means through which pictographic meanings are accomplished on the book’s pages.

Upon close examination, the portrayed scene seems to reiterate the well-known story of the battle of the Ammunition Hill. Notably, the story consumes the space of the book as its plot progresses *from right to left* (the direction of Hebrew script). Hence part of the semiotics of these images can be understood only if the relevant linguistic code is taken into account. Directionality helps to discern that the images to the right of the vertical printed column portray the battle itself. This part includes schematic figures of soldiers, accompanied by tank(s) and air cover, as they are storming a number of buildings. These buildings are specifically identified as those where the battle took place. Above the top-most building, a text states “Police Academy”, which is famously mentioned in descriptions of the battle as an



Figure 3. Storied symbols as multimodal inscriptions.

important point of reference that was overcome by the Israeli soldiers. The inscriber is thus telling/showing that what is at stake is not a schematic (unspecified) battle, but a specifically historic battle that transpired in a particular place (i.e. the Ammunition Hill).

While the description of the battle takes place on the right side of the column of symbols, images of a different type are presented on the left. Here, the inscriber does not tell of the battle anymore, but rather tells of its victory, and the visual code that is used is not that of a narrative (progression of time in inhabited space), but of *visual symbolism*. On the left of the printed symbols (both on the right page and on the right side of the left page), we can see the Israeli flag, a large and detailed image of an Israeli soldier portrayed from the front, and the words "To Israel". These images are large and are presented statically, as is the case with many other drawings of symbols, such as flags and military symbols. The soldier, for instance, is facing the readers in a somewhat cowboy-ish stance. The image, which is carefully decorated and armored, is *representative* – it is the "Triumphant Israeli Soldier", the heroic male figure who emerged victoriously from the battle and to whom the visitors should be deeply indebted. Also on the left, the word *TO ISRAEL* (written as one word in Hebrew) is inscribed in large, print letters, which is the third word in the title: Israeli Defense Forces (*Tsva Hagana LeYsrael*). This expression appears in the printed symbol that is right above it, and it is from there that it is copied and enlarged under it to its left. While the first two words (on the right) are smaller, the word *TO ISRAEL* is larger, and is meaningfully located above the national flag, where national symbols are presented.<sup>5</sup>

The intricate and multimodal use of the book's spatial and symbolic resources is interestingly evinced with regards to the printed symbol at the very bottom (the three

arches). The inscriber uses this symbol *graphically*, as he visually enmeshes it in the image he is producing. Since the design of the AHNMS logo consists of arches, which iconically resonate with the image of the Hill, the inscriber uses this logo *as a hill* (more accurately as *the hill*) in the visual narrative he draws. Add to this a sense of depth, which is achieved via the use of perspective, and we can see how the spaces of the book and the printed symbols therein are used not only as representations, but also as iconic resources in acts of producing situated meanings.

There is more to say about this intricate visual narrative, but the points mentioned above suffice in demonstrating the impressive multimodal semiotic production that the young inscriber accomplishes on this surface. In and through this imagined narrative a number of spatialities and accompanying temporalities are accomplished. First, there is the consumption of the physical surfaces of the book. This in itself is a multilayered accomplishment: the book's commemorative surface may be viewed as a blank canvas on which images and drawings can be inscribed; yet it may also be viewed and used as a pregnant surface, which invites intra-textual and intra-symbolic interactions between the inscribers and the book's (and the Ammunition Hill site's) symbols. These interactions have depth and texture, and suggest that the space of the book can assume simultaneously the semiotic status of an image, a map (cartographic, and sometime aerial), and a caricature. Consider, in this regard, the small drawing located on top of the right page in Figure 2 (above): the caricature figure is portrayed sitting atop the State's symbol (Candelabrum), thus adding a personal, informal and amusing addition to the vertical line of formal/institutional symbols. Add to this the fact that by turning the pages a motion of images is created – and a cinematic effect is produced.

Second, there are the remembered, imagined, and (re)enacted spaces and mobilities that are performed and conjured by these drawings. While visitors are physically near the historic site, its historic-ness is precisely (and paradoxically) what suggests that it is not immediate but (must be) mediated. This is where the role of social remembering and imagination comes in, in precisely the sense meant by Anderson (1983) in his renowned work on printed media and the spread of nationalism. The surfaces of the book function as screens on which imagined images and narratives are projected, and where these stories can be viewed, thought of and consumed by visitors in the process of becoming an imagined community.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this article, spatial sensitivities and sensibilities are employed in order to highlight the dimensions involved in the situated production of meaning, produced through spatial acts of inscribing in a site of national commemoration. Findings suggest that spatial modalities are essential to the semiotic function of the visitor book under examination, which functions as an institutional-ideological device serving commemoration. Space and spatiality in this context are not incidental to the operation of this specific book. Rather, from the colonial actions that take place on the sphere of macro spatiality, to the micro spaces of inscribed national commemoration, space – possessing, marking and inhabiting it – is the name of the game.

The inquiry did not commence directly with the device of the book and with the spaces that it contains, but with the politically charged spaces that surround the book and that supply its socio-semiotic environment. As Massey (2005, 8) suggests, social

action and articulation are inevitably twofold: visitors entries are simultaneously located and locating, placed and emplacing. In the context of the state and the army, these multiplicities of spaces are always politically charged and serve ideological ends. At the AHNMS this spatial multiplicity consists of metonymic spaces that are politically interlinked: from the macro and abstract spaces of the Land of Israel, to the micro and tangible spaces of the visitor book's pages. The venerable book is framed as a metonym of the AHNMS site, and the site is metonymic of the (unification of the) city of Jerusalem, and so on. These spaces cannot be naively viewed as plainly "there", but rather as actively and ideologically indexed, referred to, and (re)cited – both verbally and/or graphically within the book. In other words, the book offers spaces for inscribing entries that are not only *about* other (politicized) spaces and identities, but are also *part of these* political spaces and identities.

Edensor (2002, 69) notes with regards to symbolic spaces that, "[s]ymbolic spaces are (re)produced by performers as sites of importance, even though they may reproduce diverse meanings about them and follow different ideas about the kinds of activities that should take place". In light of this, offering the book and framing it are attempts not only to produce meaningful acts of inscribing, but also to limit and shape the possibilities of meaningfulness that these inscribing acts can accomplish. In the scope of the present article this theme was not developed, yet a few of the entries examined above suggest a kind of manipulation of the official device, which then serves to express subversive aims of different ideological groups in contemporary Israeli society. The spatialities that are indexed and performed on these surfaces are indeed diverse – they illustrate the different environments that those who partake in commemoration see themselves inhabiting, yet the great majority is well within the semiotics of national commemoration and within the ideological goal put forth by the site.

Spaces assume meaning because they are social spaces, where participants, and more accurately participants' inscriptions, meet and interact. The symbolic-cum-material immobile framing of the book render it a stationary place of meeting. The conception of place promoted by Urry (2003) is organically tied to mobility, whereby places allow for co-presences or moments of "meetingness" in a hyper-mobile world. Similarly, Mondada (2009, 1979) recently concluded that "an encounter in public space is achieved by transforming two vehicular units into one unique participation framework". Such approaches are illuminating when applied to the public spaces of the visitor book, because they offer spaces that allow for intended social activities and for co-presences of a discursive nature.

Finally, the device of the book can be fruitfully conceptualized also in terms of the concept of *access*. In light of Goffman's (1980) notions of "symbolic access", the device can be conceptualized also as a *portal*. In terms of sociality, the intended aims of the book are the enactment of Jewish spaces, where Israeli and Diaspora Jews "meet"; the book allows accessing a Jewish space of togetherness (a communal space) under the auspicious of the State of Israel. Yet the book also offers access to venerated places, constructed as national (the Israeli State), religious (Land of Israel), military (Ammunition Hill Battle) and combinations thereof. Here the book's semiotic function concerns not only the possibility of imagining spaces (Anderson 1983), but the possibility of concretely (physically) touching them – visitors interact with what is actually a materialized instance of the State. This includes the fantasized spaces of the past ("remembered spaces"), of the present (re-presentations of spaces

outside the book), and sometimes also of the future (idealist, sometimes transcendental spaces). The ways the book offers access in both terms of sociality and space are multiple. As indicated above, the book's settings, its material features, and the ways that it is put into use by visitors produce various sets of meanings. The semiotics of the book's pages corresponds at times with those of maps, models, screens, lists, and more. It is an "open" and "opening" space, which functions in creating mobilized spaces and agents.

## Notes

1. Interview with C. Nir'el (2 August 2006).
2. See the AHNMS website: <http://www.givathatachmosht.org.il/en/about.php>
3. Interview with C. Nir'el (2 August 2006).
4. I am thankful to Talya Alon for pointing out this pictorial narrative and to Ayelet Kohn for her insightful remarks.
5. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (1998) show, in newspapers and books that open from left to right, the left side receives more of the readers' visual attention.

## Notes on contributor

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