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## The Liberated Bride: A Literary Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

*The Liberated Bride* novel is committed to present the social and daily life events of Arabs and Jews. This paper mimics the Arabs-Jews relationship through a unique analysis of the novel's characters and the mysterious motives that govern their behaviors toward each other. The narrator's opinion of the Arabs and their adherence to their dream of return to their land is also under discussion in this paper in comparison with the opinion of other characters that the narrator has embedded in his novel in order to reflect his diversity approach. The characters are not necessarily in agreement with the narrator. The analysis in this paper practices a skillful transition among the narrative characters on both the internal and external levels to impulse the literary novel rhythm.

**Keywords:** Dream of Return, Arabs-Jews relationship, Hebrew Literature,

### Introduction:

Hebrew literature started seeing the light in the European centers of Jewish i.e., Berlin, Vilna, and Warsaw. Lithuania was the place where first time ever, a Hebrew makilic center was formed which was associated with the initiation of the publication journal *Pir he Tsafon* (Flowers of the North, Vilna, 1841) that later became the base for more journals and newspapers in Russia. Hebrew literature has developed to include new genres and be enriched with memoirs, novel writing and poema (a poem which is prolonged and descriptive). Among all of them, the first novel *Ahavat Tsiyon* (The Love of Zion, 1853) written by Avraham Mapu, was the most prominent in Hebrew literature (Mann, 2012).

At the end of the nineteenth century, Hebrew literature went through transition which occurred in the topics discussed by Hebrew literature. After it was most concerned about describing the exile and the persecution of the Jewish people, the discussion of the new state in Palestine and the Promised Land emanating from

the land of settlement became the main topic of Hebrew literature as the land of Palestine is their new home. (Miron, 1984).

The topics of pre-1948 literature were in consistence to reflect important events in the life of Jews, such as their persecution in Europe, their need to find a homeland to stop this persecution and humiliation, and their involvement in wars to establish the state, so the writers of this era did not choose the topics of their work, but subjects were rather dictated to them by the events that occurred in their life. Most of these novels and stories crystallized, not because of the direct impact of the events, but because of political and social life that were imposed by these values. On this basis, the generation post-1948 studied and realized Zionism's values more than taking them as axioms, something that caused a revolution between these two generations and their works, finding that a conversion in Hebrew literature had happened, from the literature of (WE) to the literature of (I) (Al-Shami,1983).

Abraham B. Yehoshua is considered one of the Israeli writers who rejected the idea of focusing Hebrew literature on describing the lives of Jews and their suffering. He refused to include Zionist ideas in this literature, instead, he preferred to focus on the new life of Jews and the relationship between Arabs and Jews by writing to encourage Jews to forget their past and think about their present. He focused in his writing on discussing the problems that face the Israeli individual and society and trying to find solutions to these problems (Schenker,1971). The novel "The Liberated Bride", which is the subject of research in this paper, is one of the novels of Yehoshua that focuses on this idea and discusses the new life of Jews in their new homeland with its real problems and the relationship of Arabs and Jews. Through the analysis of this novel in this research it is noticed that Yehoshua focuses on the importance of understanding the other's culture and their mentality to which he considered literature as the path. Additionally, Yehoshua discusses the role of the Arab citizens who live within the borders of Israel in forming a bridge of Peace and reconciliation between Arabs and Israelis (Morahg ,2010).

One of the most important features of Yehoshua's work is that he always describes the relationship between Arabs and Jews. His novels took another direction in portraying Arabs, additionally; he gives them a voice to speak and to express their internal. The *Liberated Bride* (Yehoshua, 2001), is one of his works that describes the relationship between Jews and Arabs, and hold in its contents the dream of return of the Palestinians.

### **Liberated Bride:**

The novel revolves around two main Characters: Yochanan Rivlin, an elderly researcher specializing in oriental studies working at the University of Haifa, whom we see in the novel looking for the reason of his son's unjustified divorce. In addition, we see that Rivlin is interested in studying the Algerian revolution and the causes of the internal conflicts

that led to the outbreak in Algeria in the 1990s. Having been disappointed by the poor historical resources and the traditional research methods of finding the truth, Rivlin accepted the help of Professor Carlo Tedeschi and his wife Hannah - who works in the field of translation in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry field - to search for the motives of this revolution in Algerian native literature of the 1940s and 1950s. In addition to accepting Professor Tedeschi and his wife, he hired Samaher an Arabian student to assist him in the translation of the literary material, which brings Rashid, Samaher's cousin to existence as the second main character in this novel. Rashid is an Arabian young man who lives inside the Israeli's borders. Yehoshua is in agreement with other writers that subjective analysis of an issue would be achieved via an integrated interconnection system on both individual and society levels (Morahg, 1988).

Rivlin so much hates to see his son's ,Ofer, suffering his divorce from his wife whom he is in an addictive love with. Rivlin tries to understand his son's feeling toward this woman who even after she got married to a different man and got pregnant with this new man's child, Ofer still yet has the dream of return to his beloved wife (Yehoshua, 2001).

The complicated relationship among Rivlin's family members is in similarity to this of Arabs and Jews. The story starts with the Shyly-good relationship between Arabs and Jews who reside inside the Israel's borders, while with little hope to seek such relationship outside of the borders, which doesn't last long for this hope to attenuate.

In the same time and as previously mentioned, Rivlin has to continue his research to investigate the causes of the Algerian revolution in parallelism with the events occurred at that time in a trial put Algerian eastern society and its national identity into existence, upon which Rivlin extended the discussion material of a book he previously worked on. However, there was never a lack of interruptions to continue his investigation as a result of 1991's violence events, in addition to his disappointment from the quality of previous researcher's work and the historical resources. Rivlin admits that over the 30 years through which the history of the region was of his specialty, such events were unpredictable. Rivlin believes that there was no legitimate reason for such violence events and that the researchers should have ethical asset from which a necessity generates to consider both the past and the present of an event, and to maturely judge the relevant researcher's work and the historical resources:

ולהתעלם ממה שמתפרק עכשיו בטרור מטורף, חסר-הבחנה. חוקר שיש בו מינימום יושר לא נועל את עצמו רק במסמכים ישנים ובמאמרים של חוקרים אחרים, אלא גם מפשפש בעיתונים כדי לקשר בין עבר להווה ולהראות שמה שמתרחש היום לא נפל מן השמיים אלא היו לו שורשים בעבר" (Yehoshua, 2001).

Even though Rivlin came up with a conclusion saying that he gave up on all Arabs:

"קיבלתי ייאוש מכל הערבים" (Yehoshua, 2001).

When he was busy writing about Algerian struggle in the 1940s and 1950s, and he was in a semi-agreement with Hanna Tedeschi that Arabs who wrote the Algerian stories in 1940s are the same as those who practice violence in Jerusalem nowadays:

אל תיתמם, יוחנני, מי שנובר כל הזמן כמוני בשירי הקדמונים מזהה את השורש המשותף של כולם" (Yehoshua,2001).

Rivlin was conservative in this regard and was still in a full belief with the writer of this novel that doing academic research is not enough for a comprehensive and deep understanding of the reality of a matter. Rivlin considers his direct involvement in the Palestinian society, visiting sites and discovery trips are necessary for the evaluation process, with which Rivlin found to be in a stronger agreement when he visited the student Samaher's house when it came up to his mind that the residents of this house are Arabs but are different than the Algerians whom he desperately trying to solve their identity secrets:

"צודקת המתרגמת הג'אהילית לגבי אותו שורש משותף וקדום לפעמים קשה ואכזר , לפעמים נדיב ומפנק בהכנסת-אורחים יפה" (Yehoshua,2001).

It is clear now that Rivlin's concern passes the Algerian to expand and include focusing on the Arabs in whole. Rivlin lives in same village as Samaher's, and he was invited by Smaher's Mother, Afifa, to join them for Ramadan breakfast, when an idea shined in his mind "is this what I have been looking for, a new relationship with the Arabs", which he wanted so badly on both the personal and the professional levels (Yehoshua,2001), Rivlin believes that to understand the Arabic reality, it is a necessity to get involved in their life, thus he accepted Rashid's offer, Smaher's Cousin, to go with him for a night visit to Rashid's sister , Rawdah, who lives in ,Zababdeh, an out borders village. Rawdah cannot go back to her village of birth and join her family in Galilee since her husband is a local Arabian who lives outside the borders. It was their first trip together, Rivlin and Rashid had a fun trip and they were both happy. Through the visit, Rivlin's was introduced to a church priest who invited him to a ceremony where a Lebanese nun should perform. This ceremony was executed in a support of Christian minority in Zababdeh, when the priest addressed Rivlin saying "you came to the Garden of Aden and not to Zababdeh":

"ואז תראה, אדוני, "לא לכנסייה של אל-זַבַּאבְדֶּה הגעת, כי אם לגן-עדן ..לשמוע קונצרט של מלאך" (Yehoshua,2001) "

Rivlin lived a peaceful moment in the ceremony in which Arabian Muslims and Christians were united, he was positively motivated in the ceremony where he started to be in sync with the different religious

beliefs, and he talked to himself saying "Why are you surprised professor, are you crying, It is the hymn of Garden of Aden, it is being singed in Greek one time and in Arabic another, Insha-Allah one day it will be singed in Hebrew, if you Arab, are generous enough to do so":

"למה אתה מתפלא פרופסור?...תבכה. תייבב. כזו היא שירת גן-העדן. לפעמים בערבית, לפעמים ביוונית. אינשאללה, יום יבוא וגם בעברית, אם תהיו יותר נדיבים"(Yehoshua,2001).

Rivlin happily left the ceremony full of hope, but the hope he left this ceremony with started to vanish at a different ceremony when the same nun was on the stand in Ramallah, where Rivlin, his wife and Rashid went all together, but this time Rivlin's eyes were crusty without tears and he could not restore that peaceful feelings he had in the church, now the narrator steers the stream of event in a totally different direction using Rivlin's reaction at this time whom this event put through brain storm.

In this ceremony Arabic and Jewish poets gathered for the memory of dividing the United Nation of Palestine as Rashid notified Rivlin (Yehoshua, 2001). The ceremony started with Arabic love songs from the 1980s, and then songs gradually started to take an antiemetic trend. For instance, the first song tells a story of a Bar female owner who used alcohol to seduce a young Arabic boy to steal his money. The narrator states in his writing that Palestinians were laughing from the bottom of their hearts while the Jews were politely smiling (Yehoshua, 2001). When the nun started singing her hymn, the Garden of Aden, the Arabic audience protested trying to turn the hymn to a Palestinian national song which resulted in the nun withdrawal off the stand (Yehoshua, 2001).

What drove Rivlin's attention and triggered his awareness alarm of danger the most is when the Arabic audience started protesting, Rashid raised his hand fingers with the "V" victory sign. In addition, the protesting audience deeply impacted and awakened Rivlin's awareness of the upcoming abyss that is waiting to happen in the future, and this reaction of the Arabic audience is not but a sign of their deep-rooted belief that they are the absolute and the only owners of the land which they totally reject sharing it with anybody else, yet this vision is nonnegotiable, even by the Arab Israelis who lives inside the borders. Going back to Rashid and Rivlin relationship, it is worth mentioning that in a visit to Rashid's house, Rivlin felt he needed to take a nap and Rashid let him sleep in his bed. While Rivlin in the young man bed he opened his eyes then said "why do not I sleep a bit more, I may fall in one of this young man's dreams that has Arabic roots":

"למה לא לנסות למשוך עוד שינה במיטתו של ראשד...ולפלות מבין מצעיו הלום ישן , שיטעים אותו משהו משורשי הערביות" (Yehoshua,2001).

From Rashid point of view, Rivlin is his friend regardless being a Jew and he treated him with the Arabs values and hospitality, however, that does not mean that Rashid has given up on his case as a rooted Arabic into Palestine even he lives inside the borders, and he yet considered Rivlin as

a guest. On the other side, taking the point of the narrator's view which he used Rivlin's character to express to the reader how disappointed Rivlin was and how badly did he fail to judge Rashid as he thought Rashid has given up his Arabic dream, which was not the case even though the narrator tries to sarcastically express Rivlin's view of the matter.

Rashid was trying to get his sister and her children a permission to be able to visit her family inside the borders. When Rashid failed to secure the permission, he tried to get her to visit her family illegally by trespassing through the borders. The Israeli soldiers caught them and they separated the family by letting only the small children in with their mother while the returned back the other two older sons. The oldest son, Rasheed, did not give up and tried to trespass again alone when the young boy got shot by a Druze officer who was on a hunting trip with his friend, which drives the novel sequence of events to a new direction one more time. After a day from Rasheed's accident, Rashid started recalling the events that led to put Rasheed in this situation. Rashid is talking to himself saying "A disaster has just come to reality because of you, even I jump barefoot into dark, this will not fix anything..., the same as in the awake light path, like a giant tire rolls, like any disaster in the world you never think it could happen":

"מתוך עיניך יפרוץ אסון כמו חלום אל ממשות, וגם אם תקפוץ יהף בחשיכה לעצור אותו, כבר איחרת. צל מהיר יהלוף בחדר שאתמול רוקנת, ודרך שמשות החלון יחזור להתמזג בוודאות שמחכה לו. וכך, בדרכי האור המתעורר, צמיג גדול מתגלגל כדרך כל אסון אל מקום שמעולם לא חשבת עליו. ברח טלה אל הצייד אשר חלם חלום." (Yehoshua, 2001)

For the second time after his novel, *the Lover*, The narrator in this novel, *the Liberated Bride*, penetrates the inside of the Arabic Character and connects the internal world of the Arab Israeli's voice to the reader.

The Arabian people around Rashid in his village were trying to make him feel better, they were trying to convince him to forget about it as it was just an accident that was meant to be by Allah which he is in a full disagreement with them. He further said to them "You stubborn ignorants, for whom are you explaining that it was just meant to be... Oh Allah take me to you, save me from this mud, I am dead but alive, you are the immortal...I am like a lion's cub who to you I resort and into your arms I fall to become full of strength and bravery":

"הו ג'אהילים, הו עקשנים, למי תסביר ומי יאמין לך שיש תקיף מן הגורל וחזק מאלוהים, וזו הזכות, שמתוכה מגיח הצדק המתוק. וזאת הזכות אשר דרשה אותך. קח אותי היא צעקה ..... חלץ אותי מתוך הבוץ הלבן .... קח אותי אתה, ערבי-ישראלי, שגם אם אומרים נוכח-נפקד, אתה קיים.... וכגור אריות קפצה הזכות אל חיקך, והתמלאת העזה" (Yehoshua,2001).

The saying of Rashid above reflects his zeal to what he believes in, his dream of return, his nonnegotiable right in the land and his insistence to make this dream becomes true. His motivation to bring his sister and her children to his village, was not only because he loves them, but for his full belief of their right of return. Rashid's character is of special interest of the

narrator in this novel, his motivation and feeling from which a driven behavior is dissected by a skilled narrator, Rashid the Arabian or the Arab Israeli, is not but a Palestinian like all Palestinians who live outside the Israeli's borders, and they all originated from one Arabic root with the eternal dream of return. We can see this concept dominates in Rashid in a trip with Rivlin, when he stopped and grabbed Rivlin's attention pointing with his finger to a small hill where a cultural center is built, Rashid said, addressing Rivlin, up there was our village, Der Alqasi, but he felt sad when Rivlin replied, It Was, for Rashid to reply after a pause, Yes It was,. However, in the narrator's opinion, the dream of return is impossible and unrealistic, or a paralyzed illusion as he describes it. This return is accompanied with a severe danger as it causes more problems and makes both, Arabs and Jews, even worse. Rasheed's accident while trying to cross the border addressed this idea.

This novel continues the matter with another vision than Rashid's, Rasheed's vision. The young boy allows the narrator in to his internal drowning in his Mother's dream and loves to hear stories about her village from her, but he realized that when he sees the lights in a settlement inside the borders and thinks he can easily reach out to it, it becomes out of his reach where in the middle of the road he feels lost in an unknown place with a big mountain that separates him from his destination. At that point he feels that he is not attached as he thought he was when he was hearing the stories, and keep going is not worth the price. Rasheed's feeling of guilt toward his sick father whom Rasheed so much misses and whom was left behind alone in his village outside the borders, this feeling of guilt makes him start talking to himself saying "what if my father died while I am not next to him...I cried from the bottom of my heart, I miss my father so much and I want to go back to thank him and to take care of him, then cried...and cried... I am worried about my sick father and mad at my mother who only attached to her mother and does not care about my father". Here The narrator speaks Rasheed's voice to deliver to the reader that giving up a dream is full of pain and hurts feeling, but the dream stays a dream and keeping running after this dream leads to unhappy ends and becomes rather too costly to afford like when Rasheed received a gun shot into his body crossing the borders to his mother village, but the solution in the narrator's opinion is to give up this dream and living the reality.

The novel addresses the Arab's dream of return with two messages, the hope and the awareness. The hope is represented by increasing the level of readiness and awareness of Jews to make it stronger than the Arab's dream, while the awareness from the devastating results of Arab Israeli conflict represented by the Arab's full belief in their right of return and their exclusive right of ownership, and the absolute rejection of Jews of this right. We can see these two messages delivered by analyzing the complicated relationship between Rashid and Revlin. Even though Revlin became aware of these two messages now, he saw his son Ofer in Rashid.

The complicated relationship between Rivlin's Son Ofer and his wife is in similarity to this of Arabs and Jews. Rivlin now understands how difficult it is for his son to forget his dream of return to his wife, even if she became someone else's, after he experienced with Rashid how difficult it is for him to forget his dream of return. The huge effort that Rivlin put to liberate his son from the addiction of his wife ,Galya, who for him represents Garden of Aden even after she got married to someone else other than Ofer and carries this new man's child. The both dreams by the narrator are nothing but hallucination this which destroys whomever practice it. Then the narrator suggests a liberation technique, we saw this when Rasheed got injured and he decided to give the dream up and stay safe.

When Galya was about to deliver her baby, standing in front of Ofer, and asking him to forgive her for leaving him. She wanted to make it clear but politely and without hurting his feelings that their relationship with Ofer has ended and there was no way to return, but Ofer still trying to get her back when she stopped him and said to him " do not be sorry because we are leaving each other, you are just torturing yourself":

"אל תצטער שנפרדנו, זאת אהבה שהתרוקנה. אתה רק מלבה את עצמך" (Yehoshua,2001)

What Galya said to Ofer put an end to their relationship, a firm one; his dream of return is now dead. When he saw the woman who he is in love with and want her back so bad, asking him to forgive her and proceeds in her life consistently without looking behind, and yet having a new life with a fruit of a new baby about to come to this world, he felt so behind on this and he finally decided to give up his dream of return. We can see this when Rivlin spoke to his son saying to him "You will never give up on her, you will even love more". He said that while recalling what happened between him and Rashid. After Ofer used to consider his father's comments and advices about this interfere with his privacy, this time he replied back to his father that this time is different and he already gave up on her, but not in his heart. This is an important point that narrator want the reader to capture here, is that while it is out of discussion that there is a deep pain in heart for those who lose their home land and regardless how painful it is, giving up this impossible dream of return is a necessity.

The narrator believes that events are always tied to their history. We find here that the narrator in this novel and tries to express to the reader, whether Arabs or Jews, his future worries from the distasteful consequences of continuing to adapt this conflict. The Arab-Israeli's conflict which represented by the Arabs' belief in their right of return, their exclusive right of ownership and the absolute rejection of Jews of this right, continues to be a sign for a new violence outbreak.

## Conclusion



This paper briefly discussed the development of Hebrew Literature that led this novel *The Liberated Bride* to see the light by A. B. Yehoshua, a Jewish writer who is known by his unique approach addressing the Arab-Jews relationship and their daily social life events. In this study the novel was analyzed focusing on two main characters, Professor Rivlin and Rashid. Through studying both characters including their surroundings, this paper was skillfully able to present in an analytical way the dream of return of Arabs and their relationship with Jews in Israel. It explored yet the motives that govern such relationship. The complicated relationship among Rivlin's family members is in similarity to this of Arabs and Jews. Yehoshua tries to be more realistic from those writers of pre-1948, his focus pours into the Individual and the Israeli society and solving their problems instead of adapting the Zionism' Ideology and its purposes.

This novel tries to diagnose and find the signs that precede a wave of outrageous anger, which already happened in the past. After Rivlin's disappointment with the historical resources and the researchers' outcome, considers that getting involved conducting exploratory tours to have a direct interface with Arabs, especially those who reside inside the borders, is the best method for carrying out the diagnostic process, letting the results of this experience reforms the fundamental elements of the debate. Rivlin's experience starts positively with Rashid as the model Arabian Israeli who is willing to accept an Israeli friend to live among his Arabian family, Rivlin sees in Rashid the new Arabian Israeli generation who may have forgotten about his dream of return which generates a hope for a potential livable life between Arabs and Jews, then for Rivlin to find out that Rashid is just an Arabic rooted man like all Arabs for whom the dream of return is nonnegotiable, and who may treat Jews well, take them as friends and with whom they practice their Arabic hospitality and generosity allowing them in their house or even in their own bed, as Rashid allowed Rivlin to sleep in his own bed, but all that does not mean that they have forgotten their dream of return.

Even though the narrator has given a reasonable space in his previous work for Judaism and the complex reform of the Israeli existence, we see in *The Liberated Bride* a bold transformation in the narrator's approach to put an effort studying the internal dimension of the Arabic identity and its ancient deep-rooted culture that feeds their commitment to their land. *The Liberated Bride* tries on the Jews and Arabs to forget their past and start new beginning, to live peacefully with each other and for Arabs to accept their new partner giving up their dream of return and the belief of their exclusive right of the land ownership.

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