

THE IMAGE OF THE JEW IN AHMAD HARB'S TRILOGY

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ABSTRACT: *It took Arabic literature, especially narrative prose, a lot of time to look into the character of the Jew or to seriously describe the mutual relationship between Arabs and Jews whether this relationship indicated collision or neutrality. However, Palestinian literature in general and the novel in particular has had to deal with the Jewish model, because the nature of the circumstances and the conflict on the ground have forced Palestinian writers to involve Jewish personalities in the portrayed events. Ahmad Harb's novel, which consists of three parts, *Ismael* (1987), *The other Side of the Promised Land*, (1992) and *Remains* (1996) constitute a milestone in this context. Hence, this research traces the depiction of the Jew throughout Harb's trilogy to illustrate its distinction in describing the "other" based on interactions and close examinations. Besides, it is noted that Harb does his utmost to exclude stereotypical notions and misconceptions, adding human touches to some characters. Furthermore, Harb shows a deep interest in characters similar in form and content to other characters that appeared in the novels of other writers.*

KEYWORDS: Palestinian fiction, Jewish character, Kanafani, Sahar Khalifeh, Ahmad Harb and Jewish Palestinian relationships.

INTRODUCTION

In one of his articles about Palestinian poetry, Ihsan Abbas notes that before the *Nakba* Palestinian literature in general and poetry in particular did not deal with the character of the "other" except for rare cases (1990, 3-29).¹ In his famous poem, "A Soldier Dreams of White Lilies," for example, Mahmoud Darwish displayed a mocking image of an Israeli soldier who came to Palestine dreaming of a beautiful sun, a carefree life and tranquility. To his disappointment, he found exactly the opposite: "I came to live rise of the suns not their sets" (1980, 45). Darwish's poem attracted the attention of scholars and critics because it managed to paint the character of the enemy in a dramatic manner unveiling the fake mask which, as Hashem Yaghi maintained, the propaganda mouthpieces ascribed to the "Israeli warrior" (1981 55). Darwish also used a Jewish model by the name of Rita in several poems. Mo'een Bseso was another celebrated Palestinian poet who frequently referred to the Jews as the worshippers of the "calf of gold" (1981, 159). Another pioneer who presented Jewish characters was Fadwa Tuqan. In her poem "Groans at the Permits' Window," she presented a furious Israeli soldier while doing her military duty.² The scene is reduced into to dialogue, consisting of a collection of mere insults released by this soldier. The soldier's personal conduct was meant to give a stereotypical representation of the features of the Jew:

A strike falls on the crowd's face

¹ . All quotations from Arabic sources including the titles of cited sources were translated by the writer.

² . For more details on the subject see: Manasrah, Ez-Zeddin, *Introduction to Comparative Theory* (Amman: Dar Al-Carmel for Publishing and Distribution, 1988): 271-2.

“Arabs, chaos, dogs,
Go back.... Do not come near the barrier.... Go back, dogs!
(1993, 70)

Step by step, Palestinian prose hurried to bridge this gap. Surprisingly, it addressed this aspect so extensively that it surpassed poetry along with its revelation, symbols and short artistic images. In prose, however, there was a detailed presentation of characters, a thorough description of their features and roles. Prose, therefore, allowed the author to expose his notion of the “other.” Hence, fiction helped bridge that void related to the Jew. From the appearance of Khalil Bedes’ *The Inheritor* until the emergence of Ghassan Kanafani’s *All That's Left to You* in 1966 and *Returning to Haifa* in 1969, readers did not find many works which enriched this subject. Often these works lacked comprehensive account, deep analysis and in-depth diagnosis of the Jewish character. In *Returning to Haifa*, readers met Miriam, the Jewish female character while in *All That's Left to You*, Kanafi displayed the Israeli soldier in a scene where Hamid, the protagonist, suddenly bumped into him during his passing of the Negev from Gaza to the West Bank. Hamid managed to conquer the armed soldier and grab his weapon but the writer did not shed enough light on the soldier (1973).³ Readers did not meet the Israeli soldier in this novel. Nor did they witness any talk between the two enemies. Hamid’s beating of the Israeli soldier was fake, not convincing. The reader, therefore, is entitled to wonder how Hamid, who was exhausted by a long, rough trip full of dangers and risks, conquered an armed soldier. Moreover, it is inconvincible for the reader to read about an Israeli soldier who appeared unexpectedly in the desert alone and yet failed to use his weapon. One can ask other questions to which answers are not available.

In his *The Land of Honey*, however, Rashad Abu Shawar showed multiple Israeli figures joined by one common characteristic: racism. In one scene a character by the name of Weissman advised another character called Sarah not to send her son to a doctor however famous, or skilled at the medical profession he was unless he was Jewish (1979, 8). In another Weissman called his English friend Herbert Samuel and invited him to lunch. In an attempt to convince him to accept the invitation, Weissman said, "It is a meal of Jewish foods; no single English food is involved" (1979, 19).⁴

However, in *Zainab's Windows* (1994), Abu Shawar examined the Jewish character more closely. In the second section of the novel, the author drew our attention to the personality of the patient, Yaheel, who was rushed into Hadasah Hospital to perform surgery in one of the heart’s valves. Unfortunately, the surgery was not successful and, consequently, Yaheel remained in the intensive care unit until doctors replaced the damaged valve with a plastic one hoping to transplant him with a normal heart. Yaheel’s relative volunteered to help. In the process, she discovered Nasser, who was hurt in the incidents of "the Bloody Friday," and was admitted to hospital though he was diagnosed as a hopeless case owing to brain death (1979, 73-77). She was optimistic that Nasser’s parents would help her. However, Nasser’s brothers rejected the idea outright. Undaunted, she tried to tempt them with money. Relying on her weak command of Arabic, she said, “Yaheel is

³ .See also Abdul Rahman Ali, *All That's Left to You and the Condition of the Tortured Man*, *The Magazine of Literature*, Beirut issue 12, 1974 p. 12.

⁴ . For more details, see Hammoudeh Zalloum, 1982, 72.

rich. His folks famous traders. He pays you good, money” (1979, 80). Subsequently, Teddy Zoker, a member in the Israeli Parliament and affiliated with the opposition, offered his help through the mediation of Yusuf Salah, a Palestinian journalist. Zoker’s tried to persuade the relatives of Nasser that donation was a major political event. (1979, 83). However, all these attempts were doomed to colossal failure. What complicated the achievement of the deal was the intervention of the leaders of the *Intifada*, the name given for the Palestinian Rebellion then, who decided not to accept the principle of the bargain. The deal was not concluded and as a result Yaheel died and so did Nasser.

References to the character of the Jew were repeated by many novelists. Among them was Afnan Al-Qassem who portrayed a number of Jewish characters in his novel *The Canary* (1993). We find Yuri, the botanist who did not want the war between the Arabs and the Israelis to wage because he feared the fate of his hybridized plant. Rather, he was hopeful his plant would grow and flourish in the mountains, in the sun. And there was Shimon who cared for Josephine. She was Yuri’s sister, an American Jew who had a lot of money and was about to come to Palestine. Actually she came a little before the Six-Day War occurred.⁵ She carried the news which confirmed that the Israelis would win the war and that the Egyptian planes would be totally smashed at dawn. Therefore, Josephine asserted that Rachel, Yuri’s daughter would not be in need of a shelter (1993, 32-33).

Other less central characters were also mentioned. James Bernard, for example, was an Israeli spy, originally from France who lived in Algeria and ran a network of Israeli intelligence agents there. The novel also referred to two mercenaries who participated in the war. What distinguishes *The Canary* is the novelist’s interest to depict the reality of true family relations between the Israeli figures. This means that the hasty nature of character portrayal which we have seen in Kanafani’s *All That's Left to You* is abandoned owing to its distance from being convincing. Al-Qassem, therefore, depicted characters with true-to-life familial ties. He told us that Yuri had a daughter called Rachel, who had a grandfather. Yuri also had a sister, and all of them had friends. Like all families, they all moved in a space of difference: the daughter did not want a shelter and the grandmother was afraid of war. In addition, Yuri’s plants symbolized Israel, the new state which, in his opinion, was no more than a new experience grown in a hostile environment. Thus, it needed special care represented by constant analysis and laboratory processes. And Al-Qassem provided the character of Josephine with endless power and knowledge about the mysteries of the world, and its hidden political secrets. She could, for example, tell a match results before players went to the field.

But the reality of the characters was not always praiseworthy. Al-Qassem left no stone unturned in order to unmask the distorted faces. Consider Bernard, Jean, and Didieh, the mercenaries who stole a jewelry store during their participation in the war while in military dress. In the process of registering the events of the occupation and Palestinians’ resistance in his *Al-Subbar (The Cactus, 1976)* and *Abbad al-Shams (The Sunflower, 1980)*, Sahar Khalifeh depicted Jewish characters. In

⁵ . The Six-Day War, also called **June War** or **Third Arab-Israeli War**, took place June 5–10, 1967. The Israeli forces achieved decisive victory over the Arab countries and managed to occupy Gaza Strip, West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem, Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights.

the former novel, Khalifeh related to the character of the woman-soldier while in the latter she portrayed Khadron, a Jewish woman of Middle Eastern descent.

Likewise, Sameh Al-Qassem chose a Jewish character named Ruthie to feature his novel *The Last Photo in the Album* (1978). Ruthie was more daring, and more insistent on knowing the facts than Elana in *To Hell with you, Lilac*. She was surprised and shocked to know from Ameer, the protagonist of the novel, about her father's harsh, condescending behavior towards him. More important, she discovered another shocking truth. It was the reality of Ameer, the young Palestinian, who held a master's degree in political science but worked as a waiter in a restaurant instead of working at a university or government ministries.

There were other references to the Jewish character in numerous novels like *The Siege* by Adeb Mahmud and *The Exploder of Bridges* by Atef Halawa. In this paper, however, my goal is to deeply examine one Jewish character in one Palestinian novel: Ahmad Harb's *Ismael* (1987), *The other Side of the Promised Land*, (1992) and *Remains* (1996).

Ismael (1987)

Harb's novel with its three parts represents the largest Palestinian fictional work after *Al-Masar* by Afnan Al-Qassem. The first edition of this part, *Ismael*, was in 1987 in Jerusalem, then it was reprinted by Bir Zeit University Publications in 1994 after author had made minor amendments to the text. These amendments, however, did not lead to any change in the content. In most cases they were corrections of some typographical errors that occurred in the first edition printed hastily causing a great deal of harm.

Because the purpose of this research goes beyond addressing the novel in general and focuses on the Israeli as the "other," I will not relate to the artistic structure of the novel. Nor will I illustrate the indications expressed by the author or deal with the ideological diversity in characters' discourse whether it is between a fundamentalist Muslim and a Marxist, or between a Communist and a nationalist affiliated with Fatah, previously the Palestinian National Liberation Movement.⁶ I will not study the differences between an agent employed by the Israeli intelligence and an average farmer whose attachment to land makes him work in a settlement established by the Israeli occupation on his confiscated land. And I will not examine the revolution of Ismael, who went around drawing his weapon, killed Jacob, the settler, and terminated Mustafa, the agent in presence of people, disappeared in a Valley, and then fled to Jordan. Afterwards, Ismael remained in contact with his sister Amal (hope) who passed away while delivering a baby. It was found out that she had committed adultery with an American philosophy professor whose shape reminded Ismael of Jacob the Jewish settler (Ibrahim Khalil, 1990 9-14).

In this research, these aspects, important as they are, will give way to another subject. It is the author's featuring of the character of Jacob, the Israeli settler, along with his family relationships. Remarkably, the writer's examination of this kind of characters is worth studying. It is almost a fact that novelists hardly deal with the character of a settler in their fictional works owing to the

⁶ . Now it is the largest faction of the joined multi-party Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

fact that most writers live in exile. Their knowledge of the daily life in Palestine full of frequent and infrequent problems is very little. Besides, there is not any form of communication or interaction with settlers. Therefore, instead of creating and developing characters with human dimensions, Palestinian writers prefer to deal with flat characters like the soldier in Kanafani's *What Was left to You* or Miriam in his *Return to Haifa*, Yaheel in Abu Shawer's *Zainab's Windows*, the Jewish racist in *The Land of Honey* or Khadron, the Jew with eastern origins in Khalifeh's *The Sunflower*.

The portrayal of the settler's character is indeed a courageous act, not because of the work's content but because of its shape, its artistic construction and the new arena frequented by the author and involving a lot of adventure.

The appearance of Jacob occurred in an annoying context. Once Ismael was free after serving seven years in Israeli jails, he was told by Hadi one of the characters of the novel that his father, Ibrahim, worked on a farm owned by Jacob in the Israeli settlement. This settlement was established on land confiscated by the occupation authorities from the family of Ismael. In spite of all the advice to dissuade him from working in the settlement, Ismael's father was not daunted (Ahmad Harb, 1994 15). His argument was, of course, that his fondness of the land was the factor that forced him to do so. Jacob, on the other hand, represented the model type of the Jewish settler. Always carrying his rake, his talk was forever about the land and his attachment to it. He treated Ibrahim very nicely but his good manners were not free of phoniness. Jacob's real goal was to win the farmer's friendship as he farmed the land better than any other farmer did. Jacob did not see that Haj Ibrahim believed that the land belonged to him and his children: "Jacob and Jacob's son are doomed to vanish but the land is left to Ismael, Akram and Muhammad, for history doesn't lie" (19).

Another human feature that Jacob enjoyed was patience. His financial situation was bad but he showed endurance and now his poor monetary conditions were improving. He had also the power to tolerate severe family losses. He lost one of his sons in the war of June (1967) and learnt that his second son suffered from cancer. Of course, Jacob did his utmost to find his the best doctors to help him be his successor. The most serious problem that Jacob faced was the fact that he might not have a successor. Worse, his wife "lives like a mad woman," carrying a gun, and chanting psalms. In addition, he did not have a clear attitude towards his new homeland. Although Jacob retained vivid memories of his origin country from which he immigrated to Palestine, he obstinately addressed Ibrahim, "Here is my homeland....This is my land"(21).

The author drew the reader's attention to the other side of Jacob's face. In addition to the fact that Jacob greatly loved the land, that he was strongly devoted to family and that he wanted a successor intensely, he was politically involved. He tried to convince Ibrahim not to participate in the general strike of the Land Day.⁷ According to him, these "terrorists" and Communists wanted to destroy

⁷ . Land Day or March 30, is an annual day of protests held by Palestinians to commemorate the tragic death of six unarmed Arab citizens that date in 1976. When the Israeli government's announced a plan to confiscate thousands of dunams of land for security and settlement purposes, the Arabs responded by conducting a general strike and marches

the farm and spoil the good relationship between Arabs and Jews (55). When Jacob heard the chants of young men, on Land Day, he became full of tension and lost his temper. In a hot dialogue with Ibrahim, Jacob reasserted his own attachment to land denying it was taken away from anyone including the Palestinians (57-58). Ironically, on the eve of his flight to America, Jacob asked Ibrahim, the father of Ismail, to take care of his land. He said, "The farm is under your care as long as I am away with David in America for medical treatment. I fear David will die leaving me without an heir" (63).

Indeed in the manner of one who sincerely loved the land and was spiritually attached to it, Ibrahim lived on the farm. Worried at his absence, his two sons Akram and Muhammed set forth to search for him in the Jewish settlement (64). But, they were ignorant of the nature of the Jews and their daily lives. They were not familiar with their habits and traditions (71). As a result, they received a number of surprises. As soon as Rachel, Jacob's wife, saw them, she started shouting "Arabim! Arabim!"⁸ Then she chased them with her gun and shot them. In the meantime, the settlers were alerted and they joined the pursuit. One bullet hit Akram and in consequence, he was killed and fell in the pool (71). This incident caused a significant and severe reaction among the Palestinians especially Hadi, *Sheikh* Abdullah and Ismail, who carried a gun shakes in face of Hadi saying, "This is the solution" (75).

In the midst of events, Jacob became a military governor. Soon afterwards, he expelled Ibrahim from the farm remarking that Ibrahim was responsible for what was happening in the region. Worse, Jacob sent Ibrahim into jail where he tortured him personally. Jacob beat him all over his body including his sensitive body parts (105), though he used to swear that he truly loved Ibrahim, "By God Almighty, I am your brother Abu Ismail" (19).

The suffering of the Arabs increased. First Akram was killed, then Ibrahim was jailed and tortured and eventually Mustafa, the collaborator, was released and given free hands to do whatever he pleased. Therefore, Ismail decided to get rid of Jacob physically being held responsible for these crimes. After careful planning and ambushes, Ismael managed to sneak into Jacob's headquarters at the police station at night, when Jacob was doing some tasks. Surprised by the attack, Jacob subserviently begged Ismael not to kill him (110). However, Ismael did not pity him. Instead, he killed Jacob mercilessly thus putting an end to one of the most remarkable Israeli characters in the novel.

Jacob was not the only Jewish character described by Harb. There were other less important characters. David died of cancer America, Shlomo was killed in the 1967 War while Rachel's mental condition deteriorated.

To conclude this part, it might be said that a deep examination of Jacob's character as portrayed in the first part of Harb's trilogy indicated a few points. First, the writer chose to make up the settler's character instead of relying on ready or stereotyped characters, whose different kinds were known

in Arab towns in Israel. In the ensuing confrontations with the Israeli army and police, six Arabs were killed, many others were wounded, while other hundreds were arrested.

⁸ . The Hebrew terms for Arabs.

in fiction. One might consider the character of the soldier, or the racist politician as classical examples. Second, the writer unmasked the other face of the settler. Contrary to the claims of Zionist propaganda, the settler did not play a military role or a politician. When the strike succeeded and the military rule needed a crueller military ruler, the authorities found in Jacob, the settler, the most efficient person. The settler usually performed different roles, exceeding his the daily assignments. He was a farmer, an aggressor, a stealer of land, who confiscated others' lands, claiming the property was a historical right. Third, the writer stripped naked the fake emotions of the Jewish settler. At times, Jacob expressed his deep love of Abraham but he did not hesitate to torture him by his own hands. Worse, Jacob continued to persecute Ibrahim and eventually Jacob forced out of his farm.

As for Jacob's attachment to his son David, the writer asserted that Jacob's feelings did not spring from genuine fatherhood but were an expression of material interests, as he wanted an heir, no less and no more. Finally, the writer believed that Jacob's family was characterized by having weird relations. After the death of Shlomo, Rachel became insane. She did not care for Jacob, David or others.

The Other Side

In the second part of the trilogy entitled *The Other Side of the Promised Land*, which appeared first in 1992, the writer draws our attention to other characters that can be classified into two groups. The first group includes flat characters whose doppelgängers the readers find in other novels. The reference is to characters like the military governor (127), the intelligence officer who knew about the convict more than he did about himself (104), the tyrannical soldiers and some peace advocates who attended a number of meetings with some Palestinians both in Ashkelon and in Ramallah. As for the second group, it consists of developing and changing characters. These characters undergo certain experiences and, as a result, they are enriched and learn new lessons that bring about changes in their conduct. Every character of this category possesses an independent role in the novel. Of these one can list: Yossi, the intelligence officer (116), Arnona, the Israeli worker who converted to Islam (113). She adopted a new identity, named herself Eiman and married Hadi, one of the most prominent figures in the two parts.

The last two represented two contradicted types of characters but both of them were different from Jacob, the settler whom we met in the first part and whom Ismael, the son of Ibrahim, terminated. Before illustrating the way in which Ahmad Harb portrayed these two types, I would like to assert a few points about this part of the trilogy. It is very important to note that this part relates to the period that followed Ismael's exit from the homeland and his stay at one of the offices run by the PLO in Amman. Although he was in exile, he kept in contact with Hadi, Majid, Waheed, *Sheikh* Abdullah and his brother all of whom were prominent leaders of the *Intifada* at Al-'Ain, an imaginary village near Ramallah, probably Ath-Thahreyya as the description in the third part indicates.

Another point that needs illustration is the fact that the second part includes a description of the ignition of the *Intifada* in addition to scenes that described some events in details. These scenes are intermingled with some movements between Ramallah and Amman done by Waheed Msalem, a professor at Bir Zeit University who plays the role of contact between the PLO's office in

Amman and the *Intifada* leadership in the West Bank. At the same time, the office that Hadi established in Jerusalem developed. Subsequently, Israeli responses appeared. One of the most significant protesting movements that caused crucial changes in the Israeli society was "Peace Now." Afterwards, conferences were held and speeches and words were exchanged. At this point two Jewish characters came into view: Yossi and Arnona.

Yossi, who at the end of the novel was discovered to be an Israeli intelligence officer, pretended to fall in love with Wadi'ah, Waheed's sister. Soon their love affair grew and after a few days the lovers met in Tel Aviv. They agreed to be engaged. Indeed, Yossi proposed to her. He planned to meet her brother Waheed through the mediation of the military governor (104). When Waheed asked her if this news of falling in love with Yossi was true, Wadi'ah admitted that their relation was real (113) and that they had met and agreed upon engagement according to the Arab traditions. Soon Waheed learned that the news had spread in the village. *Sheikh* Abdullah attacked the girl openly in his Friday sermon. Moreover, Majid, one of the leaders of the uprising, blamed Waheed and demanded that his sister express remorse over her shame. He remarked that she should carry out a suicide bombing, asserting that Yossi was an intelligence officer, who had been assigned to break into their organization. Majid believed the Israelis seem to have doubts that she was linked to the organization. The Israelis considered her the weakest link. Therefore, instead of arresting her, they schemed to cast Yossi in the role of a lover to reach a more important target (116). So Yossi continued to play the role that he was given. He even participated in a number of events organized by the so called "peace camp," the camp whose activities Hadi welcomed, and after Yossi supervised the preparation of the camp activities and meetings with Palestinians (174).

In one meeting protected by the Israeli soldiers, prepared by Yossi, and supported by Hadi, who was about to launch a peace slogan upon the Israelis. In the speech delivered by Yossi, the Palestinian organization became sure that he played a very smart role schemed in the corridors of the Israeli intelligence. In response, the Palestinians made up their minds to kidnap Yossi, while the Israelis planned to abduct Waheed. According to the Israeli plan, a meeting was arranged at Waheed's house attended by a few members of "Bridge," an Israeli group that allegedly promotes peace and coexistence between Arabs and Jews. During that meeting, Waheed was arrested and submitted to investigations. At the same time, Yossi was hijacked and placed in a hidden place (199). As soon as Yossi's disappearance was known, the Israeli radio broadcasted the news remarking that Yossi's "capture represents an offensive strike for the security forces" (200). Yossi's abduction had a profound impact upon the Israelis. After Yossi's disappearance, "They cannot let their eyelids close. Everyone is afraid of his own shadow. Worse, everyone fears a slot will open under his feet into which he will fall" (337).

As for Wadi'ah, she fell martyr while she was trying to perform "a resistance operation." As she was placing a bomb in one Israeli site, the bomb went off, and she became the first woman martyr in the village. A long time after the incident, Waheed revealed that Wadi'ah had passed away before she managed to prove her affair with Yossi was false. In fact, Waheed claimed she had played a role similar to the one played by the beautiful widow, Molly Morden, in John Steinbeck's fantastic novel *The Moon is Down*. Molly pretended to love a Nazi Captain and ultimately killed him with sewing scissors (247).

Yossi's character, therefore, has two sides: the false side that he used as a mask to talk about peace and coexistence and to deprecate the oppressive policy of his Government and the arbitrary Israeli military actions against the Palestinians. It is also the face of the intoxicated lover who loved Wadi'ah and wished to marry her. The other is the real face. It is the intelligence officer who tried to penetrate the Organization to reveal its secrets and attain the primary goal of knowing the big head, the brain behind the operations of the uprising, particularly those connected to the settlement of Erez.

Arnona, however, is the most interesting Israeli figure dealt with by Palestinian writers. Contrary to the other characters already mentioned, Arnona seemed closer to the Palestinians than some Palestinians. She came from a Jewish Yemeni family, an option which the writer chose to refer to the multiple and different races of the Jews mainly to the differences between the "Sephardic" Jewry and Westerners or "Ashkenazim." She immigrated to Palestine and settled in the town of Hadera, where she completed her education and learnt simple things about the religion of Islam (314). Motivated by curiosity to know more, she read Hebrew, and non-Hebrew books about Islam, and Muslims forgetting that she was Jewish, living in a Jewish house. As a result, she faced much trouble. One day she met Hadi in a meeting in Ashkelon and heard him talking about Jewish-Muslim coexistence in the Middle Ages, especially in Andalusia. At that moment, she thought she had found her desired purpose and decided to come close to him. He also liked her and explained to her that Islam recognizes Judaism as a religion that believes in one God. She also told him that she worked in an Israeli hotel located at the shore of the Dead Sea, where they met more than once (215). In the process, she offered to convert to Islam to get married. He agreed. Indeed she contacted the judge of Jaffa and declared her conversion to Islam (216). Afterwards she visited Al-Ain village with Hadi (218). There she met Hadi's mother who insulted Arnona and attacked her immoral conduct and absence of honor. Hadi's mother even hit Arnona with shoes in front of people but the girl did not blink (319). The girl was not discouraged. She did change her plan because their marriage was declared in an Islamic Court in Hebron (220).

Ironically, Arnona's adventures occurred without the knowledge of her family. Her parents knew nothing about her embrace of the Islamic religion, or about her marriage to Hadi, a proponent of peaceful coexistence. When the news was published in the newspapers, her family members were shocked. Her father, aunt, and brothers, all went to the hotel and escorted her by force, remarking that Hadi was a nasty Arab terrorist. Once they arrived home, she found many people waiting for her. They brought iron chains, and then handcuffed her. Her brother brought his gun, and aimed it at her head, saying, "I'll kill you if you don't back off from this sordid act!" (221). But Arnona refused. Next, the military governor was asked to interfere with this affair. He called her to his office repeatedly, trying to end the marriage. He warned her that she would give birth to a terrorist, but to no avail. The family and the governor were worried by such a possibility. Whenever her family believed she got pregnant, they beat her repeatedly to cause an abortion. On one occasion, she was beaten so harshly that she was about to lose her life.

In an attempt to write her story full of racial discrimination and religious connotations, she mimicked the style of the Torah. Here lies the author's tendency to mix up what she wrote with Biblical stories. Arnona's story (now she is called Eiman) were written in the form of the first and second books of the Bible before she recorded the story on tape (205-212). In her story, there is an

attempt to connect between Biblical characters like Ruth and Boaz and names of some current military politicians such as Sharon and Dan Shomron (205-6).

Remains (1996)

In the third part of the novel, a substantial modification happens to the character of Arnona or Eiman. In the opening pages she was depicted as one who lost confidence in Hadi as she discovered the truth of her claim to Hadi (1996, 36) that he kept strong ties with Silvia, a co-journalist at *The Free Voice* and that he had made use of her to accomplish his goals and upgrade his character (46). Arnona believed Hadi had married her so that the newspapers could write about the marriage of the Palestinian young man to the Jewish girl. She added that in so doing Hadi had planned to stand out among the political circles, especially among Bridge members, the group that advocated Arab-Israeli coexistence. Then, Hadi, as Arnona maintained, could offer himself as a messenger of peace and exploit these conditions to hold his own deals, broaden his experiences and obtain additional funds from the PLO office in Amman. Thus, Arnona pretended she wanted to get rid of life. After she was sure that Hadi was going to hold the marriage to Silvia in one of the luxury hotels in Amman, she tried to suicide with a knife (49). But Waheed managed to stop her and attempted to convince her to return to her religion through Rabbi Abraham Avinu. But she wondered if that would put an end to her problems, namely her confusion between Jews who rejected her and Muslims who were still suspicious of her true embrace of Islam and cursed her. To find a way out of her problems, she asked Waheed to marry her after her divorce from Hadi but Waheed doggedly refused the proposal reiterating his advice to her to return to her former religion. In the end of the novel, she did return to Judaism. She contacted Rabbi Avraham Avinu and wrote a message to Waheed informing him of the details he did not know about her life with Hadi (51). In the letter, she said,

I fought my parents and the Israeli Government in order to build an ideal marriage that can build a bridge between the two peoples: the Jewish and the Arab. One year or more after our stay in Jerusalem, I began to feel that Hadi has changed and he doesn't love me. I felt he's using our marriage to serve his own connections and his personal agenda. His relationship with Silvia became stronger and stronger day after day. She even accompanied him to our home where they spent a long time together. One day I told Hadi, "Don't you feel that you have a wife who can get jealous?" He said that his relationship with Sylvia was merely a work relationship, and that his job required that relationship. When I told him that work relationships were supposed to take place in offices rather than in bedrooms, he slapped me, taunting me as I was Jewish. (168)

Despite her confessions, Arnona remained extremely mysterious and ambiguous until the last pages of part three. Readers want to ask: Did she really love Arabs and Islam? Was she serious in her quest to find the legitimate rights of the Palestinians? Did she really endure the cruelty of her family, military Governor and Jewish clerics because she loved Hadi? And was she really a victim when Hadi dumped her in favor of his marriage to his partner Silvia, the drug dealer who raised the flag that the end justifies the means?

Other questions come to the minds of the readers who are puzzled whether Arnona or Eiman, as she called herself, had been honest in her story with Hadi, or a false pretender as she described herself in the document when she reembraced her Judaism. *Yediot Aharonot* the evening newspaper, published her confessions in the document in full (182). In the document, which the author fully quoted from the newspaper, Arnona acknowledged she rushed into marrying Hadi in

order to get rid of a Jewish husband addicted to drugs. Her parents and relatives enforced this marriage after she had been usurped during her military service. She added that after she survived the attempts to get rid of her and of her shame, she submitted to "despair, shame," which pushed her to marry an Arab young man named Hadi when she had her first opportunity (184). After her return to the previous religion approved of by her Rabbi Avenue, she felt elated. She wrote, 'Thank God I am Jewish again. I'm ready to tolerate whatever confronts me, even if my people call me 'an adulteress.' I don't think there's a hell worse than life among Arabs for a woman like me. My mother-in-law, all through her life with me, used no other name except a whore to refer to me! When young men of the village were killed by Israeli soldiers the villagers came to me and asked me what I thought of what my people did, I told them "I'm one of you!" they shook their heads, and called me in despising tone 'Marglit.' (185)

Clearly Arnona, who readopted her previous religion stressed that the Jewish people and Judaism could not be extracted from her skin and that the Arabs and Arabic could not make her forget the fact that she was a Jew. In her opinion, the animosity between Judaism and Islam was not contemporary or similar to the assault on one's piece of land. Rather, it was a cultural and historical enmity that had accumulated for long times perhaps centuries. Therefore, it could not be surpassed easily and smoothly.

So Arnona tried to be a Muslim girl and a Palestinian Arab in order to escape her problems. When she failed or worse when she confronted new forms of problems, she endorsed hostile attitudes towards people. Her new husband was not different from her ex-husband who was addicted to drugs. Hence, her letter to Waheed revealed her phony and deceptive desire for peace and the achievement of alleged coexistence. Thus, Arnona did not really represent a new milestone in the manifestations of the Israeli model in Arabic literature. Still, she was definitely different from other characters such as Rachel, Josephine and Sara.

In addition to Arnona, Harb has developed other characters. The most prominent one is Yossi, the Israeli intelligence officer who was kidnapped by the Palestinians. During his capture, Yossi revealed his relationship with his agent Mohammad Alwahdan and pointed out his role in the killing of Wadi'ah. He said, "Wadi'ah discovered the plot and tried to leave the place but Yossi pulled her from her hand towards him trying to kiss her, but she slipped away not before Mohammad Alwahdan had picked up picture of the scene while hiding in a side corner" (123-124).

Mohammed Alwahdan was not the only one who was involved in the plot. Yossi's confession illustrated his membership in the Bridge group was a pretended role in which he was also linked to Bohdan, Hadi and Abu Raed one of the leaders of the Organization (136-137). Other less important characters are presented in a developed manner that is completely different from common pictures seen in mainstream stories. The Israeli female soldiers for example gets a different treatment in this part. She is more developed and is given features that are more convincing. In the previous parts of the trilogy readers used to see her as one who treated others with exaggerated racism. She was addicted to drugs, helped the Organization, and smuggled weapons to members of the cell led by Majid before the *Intifada*. She supplied them with four Uzi machine guns and three grenades.

One may relate to other characters like the mysterious and strange way judge, President of the Supreme Court of Justice. He is a cranky and funny character who issued queer verdicts. When Waheed appealed to court demanding to restore his land confiscated by the settlers, for instance, the judge asked him to get ownership documents. Once Waheed did, the judge rejected them because they were English and Jordanian documents. Amazed, Waheed asked him what he could offer to persuade the Court of the validity of his claim. The judge answered, "An authentic document of title!" (67). Waheed submitted an authentic Ottoman document of title to him believing he had satisfied the judge's conditions, but the judge examined the documents then said, "Not enough, you are required to bring a certified copy in Arabic or Hebrew" (69). Waheed brought him four authentic copies in Turkish, Arabic, Hebrew and English. All copies were certified and sealed. The judge looked at the documents deeply then decided they were all inappropriate, ignoring Waheed's exhaustion and the trouble that he had undergone in flying to Istanbul. Then he issued a decision that Waheed's land did not exceed the length and width of thirty-three meters. Worse, the judge illustrated that Waheed's land was the piece that surrounded the Sidra tree planted by his father. Since access to it was interceded by military base, the judge explained to Waheed, he had to obtain a license from the military authorities whenever he went there (70). Although the judge was supposed to represent the perfect model of Justice in Israel, he would not allow Waheed to have access to his land for the simple reason that the area surrounding the Sidra was a closed military zone and, therefore, he might not walk across the place for security reasons. The situation created by the judge indicated the absurdity of life under occupation.

In addition to these characters, Harb introduced other less important characters with minimal effectiveness like the military governor, the Israeli Rabbi Abraham Avinu, the Iraqi Jew, who was reminiscent of Khadron in Sahar Khalifeh's *Abbad al-Shams (The Sunflower)*, 1980) and Hanoukh Bartov, the author of the short story entitled "The Stranger and I," from which Harb benefited a lot.

CONCLUSION

We draw from this analysis of the Jewish character of the three-part novel that Ahmed Harb has given this character new dimensions which are not apparent in other characters in works written by other Palestinian writers. Harb has distanced himself from depicting stereotyped characters, a feature evident in previous works. The Jewish character is given the chance to develop and change. One course through which the Jewish character grows is in the field of family ties. Harb creates Jewish characters with network connections with family members and segments of society. Another course depicted by Harb is his focus on the novelty of some of the characters. The settler, Yossi and Arnona are featured as characters who are from being common in terms of appearances, conduct and beliefs. Moreover, Harb manages to display characters with efforts to adopt neutrality and impartiality. To a large extent, his style is free from prejudices, stemming from the strong antagonism between the Arab and Jewish cultures. Sometimes, Harb seems to sympathize with some of these characters. And Harb chooses to approach the Jewish character from a close angle. The interaction with Jewish characters is real and convincing, a feature we hardly find in the works of other novelists.

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