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Variations on the Theme of Integration in the "Israeli Democracy"

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<u>Table of Contents</u>

Introduction

Ever since the establishment of the Israeli state, the internal political situation between

the Arab minority and the Jewish majority has not been stable. For Palestinian Arabs in Israel,

their condition is characterized by socio-political tensions instituted by the Israeli regime. On the

last day of the British mandate over historic Palestine, the Israeli state was established. The

state's establishment was followed by a Declaration of Independence. In the Declaration of

Independence, it was 'legislated' that all inhabitants of the state are going to be treated equally

by granting each and every citizen with social and political rights which, in a section from the

Declaration, was explicitly stated as follows:

> The state of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the
> Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it
> will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will
> ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of
> religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language,
> education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be
> faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.[1]

Although the aforementioned extract was included in, arguably, Israel's most precious

document, which is an ostensibly binding piece of 'legislation' used as the basis for the

application of law, the liberal and democratic content of the Declaration was blatantly

disregarded in its widespread implementation. This is because, in Israel there is no separation

between religion and nationality. Thus, Israel cannot be classified as an open, liberal democracy.

The content of the Declaration of Independence would hold true only if the Jewish state would

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[1] Ben-Gurion, David et al. "Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel." Israel
    Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 14 May 1948, www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/

transform into an Israeli state where ethnicity would be privatized and a new "all-Israeli identity, nationalism and nation were to emerge."[2]

This aforementioned claim, asserted by Sammy Smooha, one of Israel's leading sociologists, in his book "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," suggests that if the Arabs in Israel would denounce their Palestinian identity, they would be the citizens that Israel not only wants but in fact legislates them to be, and it would grant them rights which would put them on an equal footing with the Jewish citizens. The Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel are provided with a platform for assimilation into the Israeli state under the guise of a distorted notion of integration. Therefore, they cannot entirely integrate regardless of their desire to do so or otherwise, because it is not only the Jewish nature of the state that prevents them but also, and more importantly, it is the monologic understanding of 'integration' by the state that would require Arabs in Israel to sacrifice their socio-historically Palestinian facet of their identity in the name of purported integration. The broader claim of this paper, as articulated above, argues that prior to the process of integration of the Arabs in Israel, facilitated under the Israeli regime, the retooling of the definition of integration itself is indispensable so as to preserve the Palestinian component of the Arab identity within Israel. This paper, using Anton Shammas, Sayed Kashua and Lucy Aharish, three Arab artists who were able to occupy the Israeli artistic space, illustrates that artistic expression is the only medium where the rights of the Arabs in Israel cannot be seized by the far-reaching grasp of legislation. By placing the three figures in a form of a literary triptych, the manner in which their art, which varied in its form, shared the common ability to engender dialogue within the divided Israeli society, underlines the necessity of dialogue in order to reevaluate the definition of integration. Artistic dialogue serves three purposes: to generate

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[2] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 202.

informed conversation between the Arabs and the Jews in relation to integration; to revise the Israeli form of 'integration' which is in fact socio-political assimilation; and finally, to highlight the fact that integration, when viewed as a dialogic process, between the concerned groups, is mirrored in the dialogue between artist and reader/spectator which should be transposed to the political relationship between the representatives of the Arabs and the Jews.

The majority of the Arab public in Israel, which includes the political leaders, recognize the state of Israel and its institutions. This seemingly counter-intuitive acknowledgment of an oppressive authority in fact demonstrates their willingness to allow for administrative mechanisms required for a state to function despite the fact that this acknowledgment has been a result of subjugation as opposed to cordial reception from the regime. We can observe that through their participation in politics and the Knesset[3] elections, the Arabs are desperately seeking to be active members of the parliamentary process in order to safeguard their interests. However, the majority of Arabs does not recognize and accept that Israel is the exclusive homeland of the Jews, and view Zionism as a racist and discriminatory movement.[4] By recognizing the state of Israel as solely the Jewish Homeland, the Arabs relinquish their rights as the indigenous people of the land, and deny their fellow Palestinians in the diaspora from the right of return.

Over the last few decades there was a national awakening and revival of the Palestinian identity and the Arabs in Israel started demanding that Israel become a "state for all its citizens".[5] Hence, the question arises: *What do the Arabs want ?* The Arab public is anti-Zionist, regards

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[3] Knesset is the Hebrew word for parliament which functions in Israel.
[4] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 209.
[5] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "Palestinian Politics in a Jewish State, The 1990s and 2000s: A New Agenda." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. 62.

Zionism as a racist movement and demands for the state of Israel to denounce its Jewish

exclusivity so they can, as non-Jews, be equal citizens.[6] The critical and, frankly, more pressing

question is: *What do the Jews want?* The Jewish majority prefers Zionist dominance to preserve

the Jewish State, rather than preserving democracy in Israel - the majority of Jews in Israel prefer

the ethnic-national Jewish character to its liberal component.[7] From here, we see that the

collective identity for the Arabs, which is composed of a historical Palestinian identity and

Israeli citizenship, is enmeshed in a difficult and tense situation that the two inextricably linked

socio-historical components will live together as long as the Palestinian issue at large does not

come to a resolution.

The State of Israel was proved to be undemocratic when it came to deal with its Arab

minority. The state implements the principle of equality before the law by setting up mechanisms

to not only ensure Jewish supremacy but also sustain it. We can appoint several key areas in

which these mechanisms are seen, such as immigration and citizenship, land and settlements,

security, sharing and distribution of investments for development that will be delineated in the

course of the paper. Furthermore, in terms of the country's culture - it is clear that there is a

dichotomous relationship between one superior culture and the other inferior culture.[8]

Israel ensures individual civil rights for its citizens. In this aspect, Arabs have, through

the gaze of an external observer, 'sufficient' equality and enjoy the right to vote and be elected to

parliament - these 'rights' are the extent to their ostensibly equal status disregarding their

collective property rights or rights to an education that have not been filtered through the lens of

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[6] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 209
[7] Ibid., 207.
[8] Ravid, Barak. "Romney Outrages Palestinians by Suggesting Israeli Culture Is Superior." Haaretz. 2012. Web.

the Israeli government. However, when the question of the rights of the Israeli community as collective surfaces, it is clear that there is a Jewish Zionist consensus that denies the possibility to change the character of the state. Arabs are categorically excluded in terms of their collective rights, as noted above, because they are not recognized to be a national minority, so they do not fulfill the 'criterion' to deserve collective political rights.[9] In spite of the fact that they receive certain individual rights, Israeli law distinguishes between Jews and non-Jews with regard to immigration. The Law of Return, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, grants automatic immigration and citizenship rights to any Jew in the world. Palestinian Arabs do not have such rights.

The rhetoric of political rights utilized to talk about Arab Palestinians' rights, employs words such as citizenship and immigration. Although I have acknowledged this above, it is precisely to deviate from this kind of misleading rhetoric which implies that my people are considered as outsiders who need to secure a legal means of political identity in a land that is in fact native to them. Therefore, the conceptual scheme that must define the Arab Palestinians' rights is one of integration, not assimilation. Given the fact that the Palestinians in Israel are the indigenous people, the rationale grounding Israel's decision to apply the model of assimilation to their socio-political condition is fallacious. This is due to the fact that assimilation is usually applied to immigrants that are entering a host country, not to indigenous people.[10] The working definition of integration, which will serve as the basis of the argument in this paper, requires a reorientation of integration, from a unidirectional notion, to a two way process, that necessitates

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[9] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict within*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2011. 115.

[10] Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. "Assimilation." *An Introduction to Immigrant Incorporation Studies: European Perspectives*, edited by Marco Martiniello and Jan Rath, Amsterdam University Press, (2014): 54.

dialogue from both Jews and Arabs to compromise and work together in order to fulfill the model of a "Melting Pot," which will be explained in a forthcoming section in this paper.

Arab Palestinians in Israel are often referred to as the "ticking bomb". This incendiary rhetoric became more prominent with the rise of the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000. Effi Eitam, the leader of the right-wing National Religious Party (NPR) and then Minister of Housing in Prime Minister Sharon's government, expressed his opinion in an interview on March 22, 2002 as following: "I say that the Arabs in Israel overall are a bomb that is going to explode beneath the entire democratic system in Israel. […] The Arabs in Israel are turning into a fifth column […]. We need to consider whether Israel's democracy can continue to enable this public to go on taking part in it […]. Arabs in Israel are a dangerous fifth column, like a cancer."[11] Another instance of this inflammatory rhetoric manifests in Historian, Benny Morris' interview with Ha'aretz: "The Israeli Arabs are a time bomb. Their slide into complete Palestinization has made them an emissary of the enemy that is among us. They are a potential fifth column. In both demographic and security terms they are liable to undermine the state."[12] Consequently, Palestinians in Israel, in terms of their capacity to participate, within the political realm, as well as the preservation of their national identity, is circumscribed by the perception of the Palestinian community as a "ticking time bomb and… a fifth column". The juxtaposition of the images, one of impending explosion which may be viewed as a Palestinian backlash to the oppressive nature of the government's policy, and the other of stasis - relating to the inability to physically drive out the 'column' that is the Palestinian community as well as the socio-political stasis caused by the stalemate between both peoples,' translates into the regime's stance in relation to Palestinian

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[11] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict within*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2011. 115.

[12] Ari Shavit, "Survival of the Fittest? An Interview with Benny Morris," Ha'aretz, January 9, 2004.

integration or rather the lack thereof. The underlying fears for the Israeli government are the implications of Palestinian integration as a process that will not only unify the community but also become a source of formidable resistance to the state's unchecked power. Nevertheless, the Palestinians, with the idea of being viewed as a ticking bomb, can absorb the power of the derogatory image in order to be the agents of socio-political upheaval in order to, not spread further violence or injury, but to, simply, secure their collective rights in their homeland.

The understanding of the term integration that leads to the so called, coexistence is somehow problematic. Integration, as re-conceptualized by Michael Fix, the president of the Migration Policy Institute in the U.S, is a two way process where there are cross influences from both the cultures and both posture themselves in a manner that allows for coexistence rather than the preservation of a state of deep-seated polarization and socio-cultural tension.[13] This is a process that requires acceptance of the laws and ways of the host country by the people of the minority culture without having to relinquish their own laws and ways which is tantamount to a disposal of their cultural and national identity. This happens with modification in both the cultures.[14] Both Israelis and Arabs, in order to reach a political consensus, require collaboration so as to reach a middle ground where the two standpoints are shared, through dialogue, as opposed to delivered in the form for a set of demands. Thus, Israel has to accept the Palestinian identity of its Arab citizens and not treat them with suspicion when they embrace this identity so as to truly exemplify the democratic state it purports itself to be.[15] This is because Israel, on the one hand, asks its Palestinian citizens to be active citizens, engaged community members and claims that it wants them to participate in the discourse of Israeli political, social and cultural

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[13] *Securing the Future: U.S. Immigrant Integration Policy: A Reader*. Edited by Michael Fix, Washington, DC. Migration Policy Institute, 2007. 192.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 209.

life.[16] On the other hand, it considers acts of any type of commemoration of Palestinian history and identity as acts of terrorism and provocation. Israel must accept that both, loyal Israeli citizenship and the embracing of Palestinian identity can intertwine which therefore allows and provides a platform for its Arab citizens to integrate. This is exemplified by the fact that when an individual like Anton Shammas, a Palestinian writer that writes only in Hebrew, who represents one of the most important figures and examples of integration amongst Palestinian Arabs in Israel, is perceived as a threat.[17] It leaves the fundamental definition of integration in Israel at stake. Shammas not only mastered the Hebrew language and Jewish history, but also dedicated most of his literary work to try and invent an Israeli society rather than a Jewish society in Israel. His work is seen by many people and important figures in Israel as a threat to the state. This is because in his work, he is trying to de-judaize the Hebrew language and make it less exclusive.

Sayed Kashua, is another Palestinian Israeli writer that adopted the Hebrew language to be his language and medium of expression. Kashuas' style of writing is different from Shammas', as it is colloquial and "trendy," thereby allowing for his artistic reach to be far larger than Shammas'. In Israel, people know him predominantly from *Avoda Aravit (*2007*)*, or in English, *Arab Labor*. Arab Labor is a satirical bilingual TV series written by Kashua. The series focuses on the life of Amjad Alyean, a Palestinian journalist and Israeli citizen in search of his identity. Satirising the cultural divide, Kashua and his characters play on religious, cultural and political differences to daringly depict the mixed society that is in Israel. This show marked a milestone on Israeli television as the first program to present Palestinian characters speaking Arabic on primetime, and it generated great controversy between the Arab and Israeli media.

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[16]Ibid., 205.
[17] Hever, Hannan, and Orin D. Gensler. "Hebrew in an Israeli Arab Hand: Six Miniatures on Anton Shammas's 'Arabesques.'" *Cultural Critique*, 7, (1987): 50 .

The third character, who constitutes the last panel of this triptych, is Lucy Aharish. Aharish is an Arab-Israeli who, unlike Shammas and Kashua, does not identify as Palestinian. Aharish is one of the most prominent characters on Israeli media; she is a journalist and a news broadcaster that was one of the honorees invited in 2015 to light the torch of independence on Mount Herzl. The public committee that chose the torch lighters remarked that they were selected "because they achieved extraordinary and inspiring achievements, and made a significant contribution to Israeli excellence and innovation".[18] Aharish is often referred to by Israeli Jews as the "good Arab", and Arabs in Israel are repeatedly asked, why can't they be like Lucy Aharish, the good - "well integrated Arab".[19]

These three characters, despite the differences between them, use art as their medium to express their frustration and their demands, not specified in terms seen in United Nations' resolutions, rather in calls to socio-political action involving dialogue between the Arabs and Jews. Art has shown itself to serve as an effective way to create integration and understand the new conception of it by allowing the readers and spectators to dialogue with their work as opposed to being subjected to impersonal laws that are produced by the regime. The limitations that the state policy imposes on the Arabs when it comes to the expression of their identity, are suffocating. Therefore, the content of the art that is created can reach the people and the world, beyond state policies and barriers. It creates a new space to inspire dialogue about integration; to promote the revision and understanding of the term itself as a two-way process rather than an

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[18] Beck, Jonathan, Cathryn J. Prince, Daniel Estrin, Times Of Israel Staff, Afp, Times of Israel Staff and AP, Tamar Pileggi and AP, Andrew Silow-Carroll, Jta, Judah Ari Gross, Alexander Fulbright, Eric Cortellessa, and Sue Surkes. "'This Is Our Country, There Is No Other,' Says Teary-eyed Aharish in Arabic." The Times of Israel. N.p., 22 Apr. 2015.

[19] Levy, Gideon. "In Israel, a Good Arab Is an Invisible Arab." *Haaretz.* N.p., 11 Mar. 2015.

ultimatum declared by the state that opposes a process which involves negotiation. The artistic space, as reflected by the composition of the triptych with the three characters in this paper, highlights the need for a polyvalence of voices in order to not only tackle the problem of integration but to also first, and critically for the future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, reorient the understanding of integration as a dialogic process democratized by the space of the artistic expression.

Key Terms

The understanding of the concept of the "Melting Pot" in Israel, as theorized by Ephraim Ya'ar a Sociology professor at the Tel Aviv University not only illustrates the regime's conception of integration but also highlights the need for a meticulous reevaluation and subsequent revision of the distorted notion of integration and its practicalities. There is often confusion in the usage of the terms 'integration' and 'assimilation' present across scholarly practice leading to, at times, the use of the terms interchangeably. The regime, in line with the interchangeability of the two terms, puts forth an agenda of integration under the guise of a process that is in actuality assimilation. In other words, the Arab citizens are forced to adopt the mechanisms of the state's apparatus whilst diminishing their own national identity in order to be part of the pernicious "Melting Pot".

Melting Pot was arguably one of the most important projects declared by the Zionist movement.[20] However, the model of the Melting Pot did not work in Israel. It is noteworthy that, considering the idea of a Melting Pot as an intermingling of multifarious socio-historical identities, the diction of chemical reactions is employed as it is germane to both the comprehension of the metaphor but also is apt to its manifestation within the society in question. The Melting Pot failed in Israel because it dismissed some of the most distinctive aspects that form the final product of the Melting Pot, which is going to be referred to as the 'compound'. The Melting Pot is observed when groups of immigrants come to a country and contribute different things; following the influx of the groups, it would be hard to discern the differences

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[20] Ya'ar, Ephraim. "Continuity and Change in Israeli Society: The Test of the Melting Pot." *Israel Studies* 10. 2 (2005): 91.

between the various communities without them having to relinquish their initial identities.[21] The

so called 'compound' of the Melting Pot is formed when a variety of elements and substances are

mixed together. They are broken down and dissolved until they are brought to a new state which

represents a purportedly 'common' solution of all these different substances, while still able to

'recognize' each of the substances separately. When talking about a Melting Pot in a political

state, this solution allows the substances to mix together and form a new compound that has

distinctive attributes of its own.[22] This model failed in Israel because the final compound that it

was seeking from the Melting Pot was one from its already existing substances, put in the pot

before the process of amalgamation. This substance stands for no other than the Ashkenazi Jew

which was the Israeli ethos, to force other groups to assimilate into the Ashkenazi European

consensus.

The Arabs were not the only group that, in the face of the Melting Pot, were mistreated so

as to form the 'compound' without adulterating its essence.. The Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews

faced difficulties as well. They arrived in Israel *en masse* during the early 1950s, and were

automatically sent to development areas like Dimona in the Negev and Kiryat Shmona in the

North. Despite this immediate geographical displacement and partition, they could still fit into

the collective Israeli consensus because of their Jewish 'essence'. Palestinian nationalism and

Israeli citizenship shape the collective identity of the Arab community. There is a new collective

identity that has emerged among Arab citizens in Israel, distinct from that of Palestinians

elsewhere. It's the identity of "Palestinians in Israel." Smooha says that the hybrid identity that is

slowly emerging and spreading among Arabs is the self-identification as 'Palestinians in Israel'.

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[21]Ibid., 93.
[22] Ibid., 92.

He asserts: "It properly conveys the primacy of Palestinian affiliation and orientation without renouncing Israeli connections."[23]

One crucial aspect that is often misaddressed when studying the way Palestinians in Israel can be included is the integration of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The Arabs cannot be likened to any other minority that wants to fit into their host country, as they are the indigenous people of their homeland. Sammy Smooha gives the example of Shlomo Avineri, an Israeli political scientist who belongs to the group of intellectuals known as "post Zionists".[24]Smoohas' use of Avineri's statement, presented below, epitomises the failure to recognise the fact that the Palestinians are indigenous to the land which further problematizes the application of the Melting Pot in Israel:

> [Shlomo Avineri] nevertheless sees no difficulty in Israel continuing to be a Jewish state and maintaining the flag, anthem, and Law of Return as they are. Avineri's basic assumption is that Israel is a national state, no different from other Western liberal democracies. He explains that the Israeli anthem Hatikvah [The Hope] is no different from the British anthem God Save the Queen or the French Marseilles. All of these national anthems contain motifs that may be unacceptable to a portion of the population. The same holds true with regard to the Law of Return, which contains an element of discrimination, because "all immigration laws are discriminatory." The Law of Return is no different from the immigration laws of Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, Greece, and Armenia, which likewise grant a right of return based on ethnic origin.[25]

Shlomo Avineri claims that the state symbols of a nation state will never satisfy the citizens as a whole. His view contends that the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel is no different from the minorities in Britain, France, Denmark and Switzerland. Therefore, his argument is flawed because he didn't address the fact that the Palestinian citizens of Israel are the indigenous people, and they are not "new arrivals" that are waiting to be resettled. When talking about or

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[23] The most popular identity selected by Arabs in the survey conducted by Smooha in 2003 was "Palestinian Arab in Israel." Smooha, *Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2004.*
[24] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 210.
[25]Ibid., 211.

studying the way the Palestinians in Israel can fit into the Melting Pot in Israel, "integration," which is in fact a two way process, to be elucidated below, is often confused with "assimilation," which is a one way process.

Assimilation is a process of absorbing minority communities into the ways and views of the majority within a multicultural society. This absorption takes place in a unilinear direction as the minority groups are required to learn the customs and traditions of the majority giving up their own heritage or modifying their cultural practices to become acceptable to the dominant community.[26] This model does not work in Israel. This is because the Palestinian Arabs were the indigenous people of the place before the state of Israel was established. Consequently, they are entitled to integration and not assimilation. Integration is a dialogic process; this dialogue requires both concerned groups to not only share models of change but also to, first, acknowledge that "change on the part of both communities"[27] is essential to this conception of integration. This process manifests with modifications in both the Palestinian and the Jewish Israeli cultures. Both the majority and the minority have to exert a concerted effort to contain one another.

The process of 'integration' of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, began after the end of the Military Rule of 1966. Israel mandated the Arab citizens to assimilate rather than integrate because the state wanted them to renounce their Palestinian identity and replace it with a pure Israeli one - typifying the unilateral nature of their process which bolsters the detrimental notion of the Melting Pot.

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[26] Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. "Assimilation." *An Introduction to Immigrant Incorporation Studies: European Perspectives*, edited by Marco Martiniello and Jan Rath, Amsterdam University Press, 2014, pp. 54.

[27]*Securing the Future: U.S. Immigrant Integration Policy: A Reader*. Edited by Michael Fix, Washington, DC. Migration Policy Institute, 2007, 192.

Across a variety of the definitions posited on integration, the cohort integrating are attempting to integrate into a new country that is not their own: Integration of immigrant minorities[28]. By adopting and retooling this definition, which involves the removal of the immigrant component from it and substituting it with the indigenous Arab minority in Israel, this paper operates on the dialogic conception of integration. This redefinition is what the entire conflict hinges upon because it prevents the "fifth column" from becoming part of the structure as opposed to being exclusively perceived as the problem. The history of the conflict itself, accompanied by the regime's projects that hindered the process of dialogic integration, illustrates the need to pay a retrospective glance in order to ensure that, as we move forward, we recognize the monologic narratives of Israel's past.

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[28]Ibid.

Background of the Conflict

To sufficiently understand the Arab situation in Israel, one must examine the role Arabs have played in Israel since its establishment. This is illustrated by partitioning the 69 years of existence of the Israeli state into five periods. These periods are: Post 1948 until the end of the military rule in 1966; the 1967 Six Day War, following the process of Palestinization until the 1970s; 1976 Land Day and the First Lebanon War in 1982; the 1993 Oslo Accords followed by the "honeymoon period"; the October 2000 events and the Second Intifada.

Military Rule 1948-1966

From 1948 to 1967, an Israeli Arab identity prevailed and very few Arabs in Israel publicly identified themselves as Palestinians.[29] As political scientist Alan Dowty referred to it "as a period of political quietism".[30] This weakness and fear of Palestinian identity among Arabs in Israel emerged as a result of both, the collective disaster that had just occurred to the Palestinian nation as a whole in the war of 1947-1949 and the repressive measures that the state authorities exercised vis a vis Arab citizens during the 1950s and 1960s. It is difficult to understand the Israeli regime today and its attitude towards the Arab minority, without understanding the rotations of the regime in the past, especially during its establishment in 1948, and the start of the rule of the military government over the Arab population that remained in the country. It is indubitable that this administrative period, which lasted 18 years, was a formative phase with regard to the relations between the state and its indigenous national minority who

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[29]Kimmerling, Baruch, and Joel S. Migdal. The Palestinian People: A History. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2003. 186.

[30] Alan Dowty. "The Jewish State a Century Later." Berkeley: University of California Press, (1998): 194.

were, under military rule; there was essentially no facet of life for the Arab population in which

the state did not interfere in, whether it was private or public. This massive intrusion of the state

into the public and private spheres of the Arabs lives' included the restriction of their movement,

their political organization, land prosecution, surveillance over the education system, commerce

and the registration of birth and death certificates. The extent of this oppression underscores the

course of blatant interference in the political activity of the Arab population at both the

municipal and national level.

This encroachment by the militaristic bureaucracy was deleterious to not only the right to

life and dignity of the Arab minority in Israel but also their ability to advocate against this

heinous mistreatment. During this period, the Arabs remained fearful and uncertain about their

future in Israel as they were afraid by ejection from the state in the case of voicing their

opposition; the dominant narrative was Israeli and the political space was strictly monologic.[31]

Consequently, there was an absence of prominent voices in the Arab community calling for

freedom or equality, with the exception of Al-Ard and Maki. Al-Ard (the land in Arabic) was a

small-scale nationalist movement established in 1958. It promoted Pan-Arabism and advocated

for a Palestinian identity.[32] The Supreme Court disqualified the party from running in the

Knesset elections because the party rejected the Jewish nature of the state and identified with

Arab enemy states.[33] Maki, the Arab-Jewish Communist Party, on the other hand, was able to

stay within the boundaries of the permissible, that is the accepted 'standards' of political

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[31]Ibid., 194-195.
[32] Adham Saouli, "Arab Political Organization Within the Israeli State," T*he Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, 26.2 (2001): 449.
[33] Ibid., 452.

discourse in Israel, while expressing Arab nationalism and anti-Zionist sentiment.[34] Although the present of Maki was significant, it remained at the periphery of Israel's political discourse during the 1950s and the 1960s.

The majority of the Arabs were notable in advocating for their desire to be recognized as a national minority. People were afraid to talk about their Palestinian identity even in the most private spheres. Parents were afraid to politicize their children, so they won't go to school and give the wrong answer or sing the wrong song on Independence day; the regime, by making the Arabs cognizant of the threat of force, coerced Arab Palestinian families to fulfill the functions of the state – indoctrinate the narratives of the state into the next generation of Arab Palestinians so as to assimilate into the "Melting Pot" as opposed to preserving their distinct identity within society. Anton Shammas describes, in one scene in "Arabesques," a narrative that the writer sources from his own experiences, the manner in which his school used to decorate its hallways with the Star of David to make a good impression on the government inspector (Arabesques 237). This was the case in every Arab school shortly after the establishment of the state of Israel. Arab students were forced to celebrate the Day of Independence and passionately sing songs while holding the Israeli flag, without understanding the context of their actions. The regime mandated such actions so as to make the Arabs internalize the dominant narrative and be the site of political spectacles embodying the source of their unremitting distress and pain.

In addition, during this Period, the Arab sector was segregated and could not participate in the Israeli discourse due to lack of contact with Israeli Jews and the restrictions posed by the military government. It was a period of assimilation, where it was a one-way adjustment for the

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[34]Kimmerling, Baruch, and Joel S. Migdal. The Palestinian People: A History. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2003. 185.

Arabs to learn how to live in Israel, by studying the Hebrew language and history; it was an assimilation of a language emblematic of their political oppression and the narratives maintained by the oppressors.

Six Day War 1967-1970s

Palestinian nationalism gained strength among Arabs in Israel following the 1967 War and Israel's conquest of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This national consciousness was, in time, termed Palestinization.[35] With this wave of Palestinization, Arabs in Israel rejected the Arab Israeli identity that the state was attempting to cultivate, by promoting an agenda to create a de-nationalized Arab identity through the control of the education system.[36] There are several reasons for this political and national awakening. Arabs in Israel experienced socio-economic development in the post-1967 years, which allowed them to improve their living conditions and receive higher levels of education, that helped their movement from the predominantly rural areas to the urban landscapes; the cities served as the epicenter of both socio-political discourse but also the educational institutions where academics had the opportunity to, although not explicitly, explore the oppressive regime's practices.[37] The military government that started with the establishment of the state in 1948, eventually ended in 1966. The absence of this government gave more freedom to the Arabs in terms of their right of movement, freedom of expression and political organization. The votes of the Arabs became more important in the Knesset elections after the political hegemony of the Mapai party that

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[35] Elie Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab Palestinian National Minority in Israel," *Israel Studies* 12.3 (2007): 21.

[36] Ismael Abu-Saad, *"State-Controlled Education and Identity Formation Among the Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel,"* (2006): 49.

[37]Kimmerling, Baruch, and Joel S. Migdal. The Palestinian People: A History. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, (2003): 191-192.

lasted 30 years.[38] The Labor party could not take the Arabs' votes for granted following this political event. However, the fundamental change that affected the Palestinians in Israel during that period was the 1967 Six Day War and its subsequent impact on the Middle East. This war led to the conquest of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which enabled Arabs in Israel to renew their social, cultural, economic and political contact with their fellow Palestinians in the occupied territories.

This physical closeness with the Palestinians increased their Palestinian-national consciousness, and empowered them to express their Palestinian identity to a greater extent in public. Palestinians in Israel transformed from being passive citizens to a politically active community. They started demanding their rights that would result in being treated equally as well as a national minority with collective rights. The end of the military rule also allowed them to experience greater geographic and political mobilization within Israel; Arab-Jewish relations, at this time, were formed and developed due to the lifting of the restrictions of movements for Arabs in Israel.

Land Day 1976 - First Lebanon War 1980s

On March 30th, 1976 was the first time the Arabs organized collectively and called for a national strike to protest the discriminatory acts of the Israeli government in confiscating land in order to promote the "Judaizing" of the Galilee program. The Arabs, in this socio-historical moment, shed their fears of the brutal political repercussions for political resistance and thus, this act of solidarity illuminated the extent of the political oppression. In the massive demonstrations

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[38] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The 1970s and 1980s: The Palestinian Awakening." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 53.

that commenced that day, the Israeli police forces killed six Arab protestors, injured dozens and arrested around 260. This event was called Yaum al-Ard or Land Day. It became an annual day of Palestinian protest in Israel contributing to a competing Arab Palestinian narrative. The emergence of a narrative of resistance posed an immediate threat to the domination of the Israeli narrative highlighting the potential for the creation of a dialogic political space.

Land Day inaugurated a period of Palestinian protest that continued throughout the 1980s, and especially after the first Lebanon War in 1982.[39] The majority of these protests were organized in solidarity with the fellow Palestinians in the occupied territories or the Palestinians in the diaspora. In 1982, a general strike was called to protest the massacre of Palestinians in refugee camps in West Beirut; The Sabra; and the Shatila massacre. There were approximately 2000 Palestinian refugees killed during this devastating massacre.[40] The Sabra and Shatila massacres were a turning point in Israeli politics and history for many Jewish Israelis. It was an eye opening event that made a considerable proportion of the Israeli Jews shift their political opinion and move towards the left on the classical conception of the political spectrum.[41] It was a time epitomized by questioning the status quo. Several liberal intellectuals in Israel, took advantage of this time to publish their works and make people question the nature of and situation of Israeli politics. Anton Shammas wrote his fictional autobiography, "*Arabesques*" during that time. Arabesques got unprecedented reactions and political weight because, at the time, it was inconceivable to separate the personal from the political.

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[39]Yiftachel, Oren. Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, (2006): 172.

[40] Noam Chomsky. " Sabra & Shatila Massacre That Forced Sharon's Ouster Recalls Worst of Jewish Pogroms." Democracy Now!

[41] Ilan Pappe, Interview with Mais Hriesh on January 13, 2017.

The Oslo Accords 1993-2000s

The Oslo agreement was a practical expression and confirmation of the position that most

Israelis held: *two states for two peoples*. During the Oslo Accords, there was political air

surrounding the accords referred to as the "honeymoon feeling" of the Arab sector in

Israel. However, this so called honeymoon phase did not last for very long. This is because, as

Azmi Bishara, an Arab Israeli politician and founder of Al-Tajammu' party declared: "We are

part of the problem, but we are not part of the solution".[42] This is because essentially, throughout

the whole process of the Oslo Accords and its committees, there was no mention of the situation

of the Palestinian Arab minority that is ruled and discriminated against in a Jewish state, which is

the byproduct of the 1948 war. Despite the limitations and omissions of the agreement, the Arabs

thought that they would be granted several benefits once 'peace' was achieved. First, they

thought that discrimination against them wouldn't be simply justified by virtue of the security

threat they, as Arabs, seemed to pose. Second, they hoped that after peace is achieved, Israel

would cut from its allocations to the military and settlements, and channel them to domestic

need.[43] These hopes did not last for too long because it became clear that the Palestinian

Authority (PA) didn't include the Palestinian Israelis in the negotiations and focused on its

ultimate goal of establishing a Palestinian state.[44] Thus, instead of focusing on ending Israel's

occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Arabs in Israel gradually started shifting their

political activity and adopting a new agenda that focused on improving the status of the

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[42] "'Azmi Bishara Writes in Favor of One-State Solution, Right of Return, Resistance by All Means." MEMRI - The Middle East Media Research Institute.

[43]   Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The 1990s and 2000s: A New Agenda." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 59.

[44]Rekhess, Elie. "The Arabs of Israel after Oslo: Localization of the National Struggle." Israel Studies, 7.3 (2002): 7.

Palestinians within Israel in order to reach complete equality with the Jewish majority, and even

dismantle the Jewish nature of the state.[45] This was called by Elie Rekhess, a scholar of political

history of the Arabs in Israel: "the localization of the national struggle".[46]

Palestinians in Israel shifted from exclusively focusing on issues such as the unequal

resource distribution between Arabs and Jews, to directing their attention to the reason for why

this treatment exists, which is the exclusive Jewish nature of the state that is the origin of their

"dispossession, deprivation, and marginalization."[47] Nadim Rouhana, a Palestinian Israeli

scholar, claims that the Jewish ethnic aspect of the state of Israel, allows it to design

discriminatory laws and regulations against the Arabs to benefit the Jews alone. In addition, this

manifests as a contradiction of the defining terms of Israel's own self-image, which labels itself

democratic. The self-representation of democracy, by Israel, is blinded by the smuggling of

tyrannical rule under the guise of democracy.[48] The main role the Palestinian political leaders

played during the 1990s and 2000s was to challenge Israel's self-identity as both democratic and

Jewish publicly. The majority of Arabs in Israel called for Israel to be a "state for all its

citizens".[49] That became the slogan that Arabs carried then, and are still carrying today. There

was a desire by the new Palestinian generation in Israel to become active citizens and belong to

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[45] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The 1990s and 2000s: A New Agenda." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. 60. Print.

[46] Rekhess, Elie. "The Arabs of Israel after Oslo: Localization of the National Struggle." *Israel Studies*, 7.3 (2002): 11.

[47] Amal Jamal, "Nationalizing States and the Constitution of 'Hollow Citizenship': Israel and its Palestinian Citizens," *Ethnopolitics* 6,4 (2007): 472.

[48] As'ad Ghanem, "State and Minority in Israel: The Case of Ethnic State and the Predicament of its Minority," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21.3 (2010): 428-430.

[49] Zreik, Raef. "The Palestinian Question: Themes of Justice and Power. Part II: The Palestinians in Israel." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 33.1 (2003): 46.

the state, which is termed as *positive equality*.[50]

Many Israeli figures perceived this attitude from the Arab political leaders and public as a threat and in a way depriving them (the Jews) from the right of self-definition. Therefore, they called Palestinians to leave Israel and reside in the future Palestinian state that will rise next to Israel, if they are dissatisfied with Israel's Jewish nature. We can see that in the famous encounter and continuous correspondence between Anton Shammas and A.B Yehoshua, that the paper is going to grapple with in the proceeding chapter, that another change that was apparent after the Oslo Accords was the gap between the expectation of the Arabs and the expectations of the Jews. After the 'peace,' Jews wanted to enhance and strengthen the Jewish values of the state, and the Arabs remained the "pillars of obstruction".[51] The Arabs in Israel understood that and realized that the legitimacy of the Oslo process, including the consequences of this 'negotiation,' would only exacerbate the differences between Arabs and Jews; the irony is that every diplomatic 'resolution' pushes the conflicting parties further apart and, in turn, further from achieving a sustained 'peace'.

Second Intifada - October 2000 Events

During the late 1990s, it became more apparent that the Arabs in Israel underwent crises in their relationship with the Jewish majority and the state power. If it wasn't apparent in the 1980s and 1990s, it was impossible to avoid it during the events of October 2000, which is also known as the Second Intifada. The Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel went out to the streets to

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[50] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The 1990s and 2000s: A New Agenda." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 63.

[51] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "Israeli Jewish Attitudes toward Arab Citizens: Between Ambivelance and Antipathy." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. 107.

demonstrate. The people who were in the streets won a lot of public support. The majority of

Arab homes in Israel supported the Intifada or at least sympathized with the people in the streets.

The prominent reason as to why the demonstrations in October 2000 erupted was the provocative

act of the MK Ariel Sharon, the opposition leader at the time, to visit the Temple Mount (al-

Haram al-Sharif) on September 28 with hundreds of troops, interrupting the prayers. The Temple

Mount is the holiest Islamic site in Palestine, and third in the world, after Mecca and Medina.

The Arab sector reacted by protesting and these protests and demonstrations also included

expressions of violence that took place on the next day in the Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Friday

prayers (September 29). Israeli forces opened fire on a crowd of unarmed demonstrators at Al-

Aqsa compound, killing seven and injuring more than a 100. On September 30th, there was a

collision of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with the IDF, which is also where

many were killed and wounded. However, the underlying reasons for the Intifada were the policy

of the Israeli state towards the Palestinian Arabs, both in the past and present. These reasons also

related to the political events earlier in the 1990s and the failure of the Oslo Accords.

Palestinians in Israel went through both, Israelization and Palestinization. They went

through Israelization post 1948. As a result, they became bilingual and bicultural without

integrating into the Jewish society. They have aspirations that they await to be fulfilled in Israel,

and they see their future in Israel. They do not see this as a contradiction to their Palestinian

identity i.e., solidarity with the Palestinian people, support for the PLO, advocacy of a two-state

solution, acquisition of Palestinian identity, and the demand to introduce Palestinian elements

into the Arab education system[52]. Their Israeliness is constituted by their Israeli citizenship and

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[52] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 214.

respect to the state.[53] This complex identity for Arabs in Israel, led to the creation of different

variations of Arab citizens. Especially with the beginning of the 21st century, and the process of

globalization that paved the way for Israeli Arabs to utilize the different aspects of the

burgeoning field of the digital and communications space. Two of the artists, within the triptych

in this paper, were exposed to media, in the form of television shows specifically, that utilized

the artistic medium as a form of political engagement.[54] In the proceeding chapters, the paper is

going to introduce Sayed Kashua and Lucy Aharish, whose work got its acclaim during this

period characterized by the politicization of non-print media. Even though Kashua and Aharish

were both Muslim Arabs who received their primary education in the Jewish school system, their

stances on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and on the Israeli political situation were very different.

Aharish speaks like an Israeli centrist,[55] while Kashua is an uprooted writer torn between

tradition and identity.[56]

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[53] Ibid., 215.

[54] Bz, Itamar, "The Digestive System of the Average Israeli." The7eye. 2013. Web.

[55] Alpher, Rogel. "The Tragedy of Lucy Aharish, Israel's Neutralized Arab Talk-show Host." Haaretz. N.p., 23 Oct. 2015. Web.

[56] "The Greatest Living Hebrew Writer Is Arab." The Tower.

Gaps and Disparities

Arabs in Israel are largely excluded from the public life in the country.[57] They have not integrated into the state's sphere either economically nor socially, and they are treated with suspicion by the state and by the Israeli Jewish society. There are many fields in which the disparities and gaps between the Arab and Jewish citizens are made apparent. "The extreme socio-economic inequality between Jews and Arabs is one of the biggest, if not the the biggest, problems that affect majority-minority relations in Israel."[58]

In a study led by Kretzmer, he shows that despite the legal principle of equality that Israel possesses, there is very clear discrimination against the Arab citizens of Israel.

> A substantial digression from the principle of equality is created by the special legal status accorded to the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund. These powerful Jewish institutes, which fulfill quasi-governmental functions-such as planning and funding of new rural localities, support for cultural enterprises, provision of assistance to the elderly and other disadvantaged groups, and development and leasing of lands-are obliged by their own constitutions to serve Jews only. At the same time, Arab voluntary associations are hampered from getting contributions and raising funds because of the suspicion that they would receive money from hostile or terrorist organizations.[59]

Poverty

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), around 50% of the Arab population earns less than half of the median income in Israel.[60] Almost half of the Arab population in Israel which composes 22% percent of the Israeli population, live

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[57] Yoav Peled, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arabs Citizens of the Jewish State," *American Political Science Review* 86.2 (1992): 432-443.

[58] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 34.

[59] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype." Israel Studies 2.2 (1997): 216-217.

[60] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The Status of Arabs in Israel: Second-Class Citizens." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 35.

in poverty despite the economic boom that Israel has been experiencing over the past two decades. Arabs haven't been able to enjoy the benefits of the economic growth. There are many reasons and factors to this poverty in the Arab sector. Below is articulated a number of the explanations.

Unemployment Rates and Average Incomes

The unemployment rates are one of the main reasons for poverty in the Arab sector. In a research conducted in 2003, out of forty seven towns in Israel with higher than average unemployment rates, forty six were Arab towns.[61] The average income for Arabs in 2007 was 7700$ and 1900$ for Israeli Jews. On average Arab men earn 60% of the national average wage, and Arab women earn 70% of the national average wage.[62] Ilan Peleg said that this wide income gap between Arab and Jew workers is a defining feature of Israel's economy. Arabs are more likely to have lower wage jobs in Israel. Although over the years, Arabs have gone from being farmers and unskilled laborers, into being industrial workers and professionals (teachers, lawyers, doctors, and pharmacists),[63] they will mostly occupy the lower bars of the occupational ladder. In 2003 for example, a quarter of all employed Arabs worked in construction.[64] Most of the Arabs work in Jewish owned businesses, so they are dependent on the economy of the Jews and don't have an independent economy. A miniscule proportion of the Arab population occupy the high occupational categories. 4 percent of the workers in the Israeli high-tech sector were Arabs; they are very much under-represented; and they don't benefit from the booming industry

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[61] Ibid., 36.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Alan Dowty. "The Jewish State: A Century Later." Berkeley: University of California Press, (1998): 200.

[64] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The Status of Arabs in Israel: Second-Class Citizens." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 37.

their field is experiencing.

Arabs cannot compete equally in the job market in Israel because of their 'untrustworthy' status, exclusion from powerful Jewish social networks, and interpersonal and institutional discrimination.[65] Claims of security considerations and lack of social networks, and discrimination have affected the employment of Arabs as a whole, and university graduates in particular.[66] A study conducted in 2009, showed that one out of two Arab university graduates was unemployed, and several are underemployed.[67] As Irit Tamir, the chairwoman of an Israeli employers' coalition that promotes equality for Arab university graduates put it: "We are cultivating another talented, educated, frustrated and bitter generation."[68]

All of this promotes the significant socio economic gap between Arabs and Jews in Israel. Furthermore, it shows that there is no single cause that this gap can be attributed to. Another factor that plays into the socio economic gaps between the Arab minority and they Jewish majority in Israel is the notably large Arab families and low participation of Arab women in the labor force. Thus, the state cannot be completely blamed for the inequality between Jews and Arabs, but it definitely bears a significant responsibility because of its discriminatory policies that have actually been neglected by many Israeli governments such as the underfunding and underdevelopment of Arab industry and agriculture as compared to the Jewish funding

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[65]Smooha, Sammy. "Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: A Deeply Divided Society." Israeli Identity in Transition. Westport, CT: Praeger, (2004): 45.

[66] Ron Friedman, "Employers reluctant to hire Ethiopians, Haredim and Arabs, study shows," *The Jerusalem Post*, November 9, 2009.

[67] Figure provided in Gershom Gorenberg, "Is Israel a Democracy?" The American Prospect, December 4, 2009.

[68] Quoted in Roffe Ofir, "Peres acknowledges discrimination in employment for Arabs."

allocated for agriculture.[69]

Land Confiscation

The issue of land in Israel is one of the oldest issues of discrimination against Arabs and it is apparent to the naked eye, with no need of extensive investigation to announce the Arab disparities in relation to land. The state's Jewish identity demonstrates clear Jewish favoritism in access to land, land planning, rural and urban development, and provision of housing. As Ilan Peleg says: "the most egregious examples of official discrimination against Arabs can be found in these areas."[70] The issue of land was at the heart of the conflict since its incipience, since the success of the Zionist mission depended on Jewish territorial control and expansion.[71] Israel's appropriation of Arab land and its bureaucratic and legal restrictions on Arab access and use of said land have been one of the principal reasons of the Arab anger and protests. Israel undertook a program of "Judaizing" the country through a series of laws and regulations.[72] Part of these regulations was the transferring of land ownership from the hands of the Arabs to the Jews. Consequently, the Jewish community, from controlling only 13.5 percent of the land in 1949, owned and controlled 93 percent by the 1960s.[73] Between 50 and 60 percent of the Arab held land was expropriated by the state, and they lost their collective territorial assets and interests because all the land that was transferred to the state, supposedly for public purposes, being

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[69] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011):38-39.

[70] Ibid., 39-40.

[71] Baruch Kimmerling, Zionism and Territory: The Socioterritorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics.

[72] O. Yiftachel. & A. (S.) Kedar, "Landed Power: The Making of the Israeli Land Regime," *Theory and Criticism* 16, (2000): 67–69 (Hebrew).

[73] Ibid., 4.

available for Jewish use only.[74]

Even though the Arab population has increased since the establishment of the Jewish state, the percentage of land available to them has alarmingly shrunk. Arabs own only 3.5 percent of the land in Israel, and live on less than 2.5 percent, even though they compose 22.3 percent of the Israeli population.[75] The majority of the Galilee region inhabitants are Arabs, about 70 percent. The Arab municipalities have jurisdiction over only 16.1 percent of the land. The similar case at the Israeli Negev, where 25 percent of its inhabitants are Arabs, illustrates that Arab run municipalities have jurisdiction over merely 1.9 percent of the land.[76] Arabs have been prevented from establishing new settlements in Israel. Since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, there were 700 hundred Jewish settlements established within Israel's pre 1967 borders, and no Arab settlements. With an exception of the few settlements in the Negev that was aimed at urbanizing and geographically concentrating the Bedouins in the Negev and the Northern Galilee, half of the Bedouin population reside in the new townships established by the state.[77] The rest, about 80,000 people live in 36 "unrecognized" villages. They live in extreme poverty and lack basic necessities, such as water, sewage and electricity. Moreover, they live in the constant threat of having to evacuate their villages at anytime, and having their homes demolished because the state deems them illegal.

[74]Yiftachel, Oren. Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, (2006): 166.

[75]Yiftachel, Oren, Rasem Khamaisi, and Sandy Kedar. 2000. Land Issues. In After the rift: New directions for government policy towards the Arab population in Israel. An emergency report by an inter-university research team, submitted to Mr. Ehud Barak, prime minister of Israel, November 2000. 17.

[76] Ilan Peleg, "Jewish-Palestinian Relations in Israel: From Hegemony to Equality?" International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 17,3 (2004): 422.

[77]Yiftachel, Oren, Rasem Khamaisi, and Sandy Kedar. 2000. Land Issues. In After the rift: Newdirections for government policy towards the Arab population in Israel. An emergency report by an inter-university research team, submitted to Mr. Ehud Barak, prime minister of Israel, November 2000. 17.

Housing Development

The lack of land resources leads to the problem of housing and housing development amongst the Arab sector. Arab towns and cities are very densely populated due to the severe shortage of housing. Between 1975 and 2000, public housing units built for the Arab population were just 0.3 percent of the total (fewer than 1,000 units out of a total of 337,000.[78] The government poses many restrictions on residential construction. It is very difficult for Arabs to obtain building permits, thus, a lot of the times they build their housing without the possession of the legal papers. The government often demolishes these houses akin to the way it happened in Qalansawe, an Arab city in the Central district of Israel. The government tore down 13 houses in January of 2017, which lead to massive Arab demonstrations all over Israel. On the one hand, the government punishes the Arabs who build without the legal permits and on the other hand, it doesn't provide them with any alternative.

There are many barriers for Arabs to live in Jewish communities, both formal and informal. Arabs are excluded from any land that is allocated by the Jewish National Fund (JFN) and the Jewish Agency, that are run exclusively by Jews are solely geared toward serving Jews.

Municipality Allocation

Municipalities in Israel are not funded equally. Arab municipalities are significantly underfunded when compared to Jewish municipalities. They receive very insufficient monetary support to develop their physical infrastructure required for utilities.[79] Arab towns in Israel

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[78] International Crisis Group. "Identity Crisis: Israel and its Arab Citizens." *Middle East Report* 25.1 (2004): 12.

[79] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The Status of Arabs in Israel: Second-Class Citizens." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 43.

receive less money than the settlements in the occupied territories. The government allocates

1241 NIS (explain NIS per capita) per capita in West Bank Settlements, compared to only 738

NIS in Arab towns.[80]

Schools

The lack of municipal funding in Arab towns, affects the public schooling system and its

allocation directly. Arab schools are severely ill-equipped and insufficiently furnished as

compared to Jewish schools, and often, there is lack of personnel that leads to creating larger

class size.[81] This affects and exacerbates the public spending on education per child in Arab

towns, which is about one third of that spent predominantly in Jewish municipalities. This

explicit disequilibrium in the allocation of funds prevents Arab schools from providing their

students with extracurricular activities, health services and counseling.[82] The provision of a

diluted form of education preserves the Arab dependence upon the Jewish state.

Law of Return

The Law of Return is an Israeli legislation that was passed on July of 1950, two years

after the establishment of the state. The law states that Jews, regardless of their country of origin

and whether or not they can show links to Israel-Palestine have the right to live in Israel and gain

Israeli citizenship: "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh".[83] The Arab

Palestinians citizens who lived in Historic Palestine for generations and fled or were driven out

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[80] The Marker supplements, Ha'aretz, February 13, 2006.

[81] Shafir, Gershon, and Yoav Peled. Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, (2002): 123.

[82] Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "The Status of Arabs in Israel: Second-Class Citizens." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 44.

[83] "Israel's Basic Laws: The Law of Return." Israel's Law of Return. N.p., n.d. Web.

of their villages during the 1948 War and had to seek refuge in other countries due to their Nakba (Tragedy) are abstained from this right, even though they have documented ancestral homes in the country. Moreover, the Palestinians who fled their villages and found refuge in other Arab towns or villages in Israel are not allowed to go back to their villages of origins. These internally displaced persons (IDPs).[84] This law is seen as offensive and carries clear attempts of institutionalized ethnic discrimination.

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[84]Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. "Palestinian Politics in a Jewish State, The 1990s and 2000s: A New Agenda." Israel's Palestinians the Conflict within. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (2011): 66.

<u>The Triptych</u>

Anton Shammas - *Arabesques*

Anton Shammas' writings raise concerns about the essence of the Hebrew language and its position in terms of theology. It also raises questions about the core of the language and the role it plays in Jewish nationalism the mobilization of the Hebrew language before the establishment of the state of Israel, was one of the most important tools for the Jews to create their "imagined community" to form their collective identity. As literary scholar Michael Gluzman articulates: "The Hebrew writer often perceived himself as the "watchman unto the house of Israel".[85] Gluzman echoed H.N Bialik when he wrote in his book Dvarim Shebe'alpe:

> And indeed, only through Hebrew literature did we arrive at revival and Zionism. Without it, we wouldn't have arrived at this point. All of [Hebrew] literature of the last hundred and fifty years has been a preparation for our revival. He who doesn't understand this, his feet did not stand on the Mount Sinai of Hebrew literature. Even the writers of the *Haskalah,* who are viewed as anti-nationalists, prepared us and brought us to the present. This cannot be denied: that from Smolenskin on, it was Hebrew literature alone that refined the nation and brought us to revival because she [Hebrew literature] was the guide.[86]

Hannan Hever, a scholar of Modern Hebrew literature argues in her essay Ivrit be-eto Shel Aravi: "The Hebrew writing of an Arab writer is an unusual phenomenon in the Israeli cultural landscape, and undoubtedly involves a blurring of the traditional boundaries of the national culture."[87] Many agree with Hever and see that the choice that Shammas made to write in Hebrew (as a non-Jew), involves 'blurring' of the traditional boundaries of the national culture. It is seen as a threat that Shammas sought to de-Judaize the Hebrew language and turn it

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[85] Ezekiel 3:17 KJV: Son of Man, I Have Made Thee a Watchman Unto the House of Israel: Therefore Hear the Word at My Mouth, and Give Them Warning from Me.

[86] H.N Bialik. "Dvarim shebe'alpe. Vol. 1 Tel Aviv: (1965):148.

[87] Gluzman, Michael. "Post-Colonial Intertexuality in Anton Shammas' Arabesques." Journal of Modern Jewish Studies 3.3 (2004): 319.

into a language shared by all Israelis, Jews and Arabs alike.[88] Shammas calls for liberating

Hebrew from its dogmatic theological signification and subsequently deny its exclusivity to

Judaism.[89] Shammas' response to Hever and other similar voices was as such:

> What I'm trying to do mulishly, it seems-is to un-Jew the Hebrew language, to make it more Israeli and less Jewish, thus bringing it back to its Semitic origins, to its place. This is a parallel to what I think the state should be. As English is the language of those who speak it, so is Hebrew; and so the state should be the state of those who live in it, not of those who play with its destiny with a remote control in hand.[90]

Shammas' most acclaimed work is the Hebrew novel, *Arabesques* (1986). Arabesques

explore issues such as inner exile, cultural and linguistic displacement. It is the history of the

narrator's family. He identifies himself in the novel as Anton Shammas. In the first part of the

novel, "The Tale," he lays out the story of his family's history. It extends from the days of the

Ottoman and British rule of Palestine when his family emigrated from Syria during the first half

of the 19th century. They settled in Fassuta, a village in the northern district of Palestine in the

Galilee. He illustrates his family's history throughout the Arab Uprising of 1936-1939; the

establishment of the state of Israel in 1948; the 1967 Six Days War; the occupation of the Gaza

Strip; and the West Bank. Shammas argues that the novel's Hebrew should be perceived as a tool

to challenge the narrative of Israel, in historian Baruch Kimmerling words "as a homogenous

ethno-national entity and identity," and try to replace it with "a new local national identity, or

nationality, common to Jews and Arabs of the country, and based solely on state citizenship and

territory". [91] Shammas employs the language to be his novel's rhetoric thereby highlighting the

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[88]Hever, Hannan, and Lisa Katz."The Post-Zionist Condition." *Critical Inquiry,* 38.3 (2012): 630.

[89] Brenner, Rachel Feldhay. "In Search of Identity: The Israeli Arab Artist in Anton Shammas's Arabesques." *PMLA*, 108.3 (1993): 437.

[90] A. Shammas. "Your Worst Nightmare." *Jewish Frontier* 56.4 (1989): 8-10.

[91] Shai Ginsburg. "'The Rock of Our Very Existence': Anton Shammas's 'Arabesques' and the Rhetoric of Hebrew Literature." *Comparative Literature,* 58.3 (2006): 188.

conflation of the literary realm with the employment of a language that is itself inherently politicized given the Palestinian-Israeli socio-historical context. When interpreting any written text, there is always a gap created between the words and the meaning that the writer intends through its use. This gap can be translated in a form of symbols that hold specific definitions and have certain implications beyond the text. In Shammas' case, the Hebrew language signifies the separation between himself and the state of Israel, and it communicates the cultural and political dialectics that illustrates this distance. While abandoning Arabic, Shammas' mother tongue, he distances himself from the Palestinian tradition he depicts authentically in his book. However, his choice of Hebrew fictionalizes the autobiography. It presents a threat to the Jewish hegemony over Hebrew literature; thus, he is estranged by the literary tradition he himself adopted.

The intentionality of Arabesques is to cultivate a process of questioning the status quo within the reader. It challenges the reader's perspective on the Palestinian problem and makes him question the self-identity of the Palestinian and its historicity. The exposure of these new perspectives, create a demand for the reevaluation of the ideological norms that shaped the Israeli attitude towards the Palestinian problem. It prompts the audience with a provocative rereading of the reality they live in. Furthermore, the text presents a critical rereading of the writer's own norms, a reexamining of his position as an Israeli artist with a Palestinian identity and lineage.

As shown in the previous chapters, the Jewish-Hebrew culture in Israel is the superior one, while the Palestinian culture is inferior. Shammas' decision to write in the 'superior' idiom to tell the story of the 'inferior' Palestinian, breaks the norms and exclusivity of Hebrew literature and Israeli culture as a whole. Shammas sets his story in the central arena of Israeli culture and thereby diminishes his peripheral, marginal status, and fashions an artistic space for

the Palestinian writer and Israeli readers. He appropriates Hebrew to tell his story, and with his story being non-Jewish, he deconstructs its theological and ideological premises. This is because, Hebrew literature is usually taken to be Jewish literature.[92]

Historical precedents view the adoption of the colonizer's language as a betrayal of the original language and by extension the nation and its culture. This is because, it is seen as a form of both 'acceptance' of and 'submission' to the colonizer.[93] On the contrary, the objection to this position underlines the fact that the adoption of the colonizer's language is necessary. This is because the linguistic mode communicates a conflicted desire of simultaneously asserting the merit of the colonized culture and self, and integrating into the new dominant culture. As of now, the common language allows a two-way correspondence. Arabesques recounts an autobiographical narrative that on the one hand, expresses Palestinian oral tradition and on the other hand, due to its stylistic features, claims a place in the Hebrew literary tradition. The deliberate choice to write in Hebrew, the language which defines the genre of literature predominantly read by Israelis, with the narrative of a Palestinian at its essence, strongly suggests an implied audience for Shammas' narrative. This "Palestinian Arabic story written in Hebrew letters"[94] is intended for Israeli readership to promote dialogue where the readers will not only respond to the formal aspects of the text but they would also respond to the intentionality of the work itself.

Shammas is conscious of the obstruction and complication of the dialogic mode he is trying to promote. One of the novel's characters, Yehoshua Bar-On, a Jewish Israeli writer who

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[92] Feldman, Yael S. "Postcolonial Memory, Postmodern Intertextuality: Anton Shammas's Arabesques Revisited." *PMLA*, 114. 3 (1999): 373.

[93] Brenner, Rachel Feldhay. "In Search of Identity: The Israeli Arab Artist in Anton Shammas's Arabesques." *PMLA* 108. 3 (1993): 434.

[94] Marzorat, Gerald. "An Arab Voice in Israel." *The New York Times,* 17 Sept. 1988.

was with Anton at the writers' workshop in Iowa City in the States, expressed his wish to Anton

to write a novel about an Arab Israeli writer. Bar-On initially wanted Anton to be his protagonist

claiming that it's his ultimate opportunity to be in close contact with such an educated and

intellectual Arab. He describes "his" Arab as follows:

> He is not a rider on the back of a galloping horse, as in the stories of that "Hawaja," and he is not a prisoner as in the story by the nephew. And he is not a lost boy in love. Indeed, he speaks and writes in proper Hebrew, but within the boundaries of the permissible. [...] There has to be an Arab this time, as some sort of solution to some sort of silence. An Arab who speaks the language of Grace, as Dante once called it. Hebrew as the language of Grace, as opposed to the language of confusion that swept over the world when the Tower of Babel collapsed. My Arab will build his tower of confusion on my plot. In the language of Grace. That's his only possible redemption. (Arabesques 91- 92)

"אין הוא דוהר על סוס, כמו בסיפור החואג׳ה ההוא, ואין הוא שבוי כמו בסיפור האחיין. ואין הוא נער אבוד
ומאוהב. אמנם הוא דובר וכותב עברית צחה, אבל בגבולות המותר"

"מוכריכם ערבי הפעם, כפתרון לשתיקה כלשהי. ערבי שמדבר בשפת החסד, כפי שקרא לעברית לפנים
הפלורנטיני הגולה. העברית כשפת החסד לעומת שפת הבלבול שהתרגשה על העולם בהתמוטט מגדל בבל.
הערבי שלי יבנה על מגרשי את מגדל בלבולו בשפת החסד, זו לדעתי גאולתו האפשרית"

(ערבסקות 82-83)

The difficulty and complexity of the dialogic enterprise is presented in this passage. Bar-

On has a fixed idea of his conception of the quintessential Arab, and the manner in which he

envisions 'his' Arab comporting himself. This exposes the double standards of Israeli liberalism

and democracy. On the one hand, Israel claims that it wants to include the Arabs in the state's

sphere. On the other hand, like Bar-On, the state has a set of restrictive rules that decide how

Arabs can act within Israel. The Arabs can integrate only "within the boundaries of the

permissible". What Bar-On advocates for in the aforementioned passage accords with the

definition of 'assimilation' explained in the previous chapter, and not with 'integration'. This is

because Bar-On is suggesting a one-way process, where he decides, and thus circumscribes, the

autonomy of the Arab so as to absorb him, At the same time, the Jewish Israeli is not required to

go through any process of change or transformation allowing for a preservation of the status quo

because the Israeli belongs to the superior-dominant culture. This can be inferred by the fact that,

in relation to Bar-On's account, he omits any scope for change within the Jewish Israeli whilst

advocating for his model of 'his' Arab. Bar-On is aware of the confusion of the Arab and he

wishes to celebrate this confusion in the plot of his future creation, with the help of Anton who

would serve as "his Arab."

Bar-On's Arab is not the stereotypical Arab that is often represented in literature. He

repeats what he thinks his Arab "is not", three times in fact. This negation of that which the Arab

"is not" has noteworthy implications on the style of his locutions. In Hebrew Folk tales, the triple

repetition is a very important and often used element in a majority of the folk stories. It's referred

to as "the trinity rule" or in Hebrew "חוק השילוש"". In this passage, Shammas brings up a very

important tool of Hebrew writing and literature, and at the same time he uses this tool to criticize

the Israeli culture and its unfair demanding nature aimed at the Arab citizens. Bar-On's Arab is

an educated intellectual who speaks and writes in perfect Hebrew; however, this occurs

exclusively "within the boundaries of the permissible."

Shammas expresses the anxiety in the loneliness of the Israeli Arab. The Arab Israeli

artist is isolated from the Israeli socio-cultural scene:

> about the loneliness of the Palestinian Arab Israeli who, having come to Jerusalem from
> his village in the Galilee . . . learned that, like the coffin, the loneliness of the Arab has
> room enough for only one person. (Arabesques 93)

Shammas expresses his struggle in this passage as an Arab Palestinian who lived in the periphery

of Israel his whole life and experienced extreme loneliness when moving to Jerusalem which is

the center of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, and the place where the bitter reality of the Arab's quotidian activities in Israel are most apparent.

The critical response to these passages has noted that the character of Bar-On carries a close resemblance to A.B. Yehoshua. A.B Yehoshua, a Jewish Israeli writer, is considered to be part of Israel's "peace camp".[95] The "peace camp", as it was always quaintly postured itself as, has never recovered from the assassination in 1995 of Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister who appeared to be on the brink of finalizing the peace deal they had all been advocating for decades. Inside Israel, he is regarded as one a symbols of the unofficial liberal conscience of the nation[96]. We can see this resemblance in the way they both approach and address the silence of the Arab in Hebrew life and literature. A.B. Yehoshua's famous story, "Mul Haye'arot" (Facing the Forests) also raised the issue of the infeasibility of the Arabic voice in the Hebrew narrative. In his story he says: "It appears that this is an old, mute Arab. In the war his tongue was cut off. Us or them, does it matter? Who knows what were the last words stuck in his throat?"[97] According to Yehoshua, the Arab was silent and he couldn't figure out what he was thinking about and what he had in mind. It is particularly striking that the stark image presented involves a body part, the 'tongue,' without which communication becomes increasingly difficult.

This bespeaks the physical and ideological oppression meted out to the Arab community. He then says: "Who knows what were the last words stuck in his throat?" which lays emphasis on the disparity between the Palestinian Arab and the Jewish Israeli. In saying this, Yehoshua implies that he knows that the Arab wasn't born silent and mute, and that there were words stuck

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[95] Freedland, Jonathan. "AB Yehoshua: 'Instead of Dealing with Palestine, the New Generation Do a Play or Write a Story'." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 22 Apr. 2016.
[96] Ibid.
[97] A.B Yehoshua. "Kol Hasiporim" (1993): 105.

in his throat before his tongue was cut off. However, he never learned to know what these words and experiences meant. The apathetic tone of the question "does it matter?" in response to the mutilation of the Arab's ability to speak symbolises the general insouciance in relation to the oppressed Arab. Shammas is attempting to articulate, within his work, a response to the voices that deprive the Arab of a role in dialogue which in turn undermines the notion of a dialogue itself as a process involving two standpoints. Although Yeshoua wonders whether the voice 'matters,' Smooha clearly demonstrates his position that it is not one voice that matters, rather it is the voices, in dialogue that matter which require a two-way exchange for polarization to move towards discussion.

There were a number of correspondences between Shammas and Yehoshua, concerning the nature of the book. The peak of these correspondences was in 1989, when Yehoshua published his book *Hakir ve Hahar* (The Wall and the Mountain), wherein he wrote an essay in the book addressing Shammas directly and advising him to leave Israel and go live in the future Palestinian state.

> If you want to live in a state with a distinct Palestinian identity, with an original Palestinian culture, go, take your bags and move one hundred meter eastward to the Palestinian state that will rise next to Israel. Your condition will be far better than that of most national minorities in the world who do not have such an option. But if you stay, and I greet you, Welcome, you're a minority. And in time of peace, you will learn, there are certain pleasures to being a minority. That's the ABC of any compromise. Otherwise, what will happen? A Palestinian state will rise and then Israeli Arabs will demand a multinational or multi-religious state like the United States, even within Israel's boundaries. So why would we call it Israel? Let us ask the computer to give us a name and a flag, that would be more appropriate. But why do Anton Shammas and his friend, think such things? Because, like the PLO, they still view the Jews as a religious group rather than as nation. Therefore, we have no right to self-definition. If Anton Shammas, whose knowledge could qualify him as a professor of Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University, still does not grasp this simple truth, then one can really fall into despair.[98]

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[98] Gluzman, Michael. "Post-Colonial Intertexuality in Anton Shammas' Arabesques." Journal of Modern

In saying that, Yehoshua defines the state of Israel as being first Jewish before being democratic. So majority and minority are not simply numerical definitions of Israel's compound, keeping in mind the ideological and socio-historical implications of the image of the "Melting Pot." Even in the event that the Arabs, at a point in time, surpassed the number of Jews in Israel, Israel would still be a Jewish state, and the Jews would still be entitled to assume the position of the dominant power in the state. Yehoshua mocks the idea that Israel should change its symbols so it's more appropriate for both communities. He refuses to include Israel's natural other in the Israeli and Hebrew discourse. He sees the Arabs as "rude guests". It is analogous to the notion that Israel is extending its generosity by 'hosting' the Arab Palestinians like guests being welcomed to a house wherein the guests complain about the hospitality. Yehoshua suggests that Shammas and his peers who are not satisfied with Israel's "hospitality" and nature, should take their bags and move to the Palestinian state that will rise next to the state of Israel. Yehoshua rejects the model of the United States as a multinational and multi religious state. He thinks that Israel would lose its purpose if it followed that model. He accuses Shammas of not seeing the Jewish people as a nation and of undermining their right as a people of self-definition, even though Shammas never made such claims. He asks him to move a hundred meters eastward if he wants to live in a state with a distinct Palestinian identity. Shammas never asked for a separate and segregated Palestinian sphere in Israel. What he asked for was recognition of the Palestinian being in Israel and their right to be a national minority, and for the inclusion of the Palestinian narrative in the Israeli one. That being said, Yehoshua is still considered to be one of the most liberal writers in Israel.[99]

Jewish Studies 3.3 (2004): 324.

[99] Freedland, Jonathan. "AB Yehoshua: 'Instead of Dealing with Palestine, the New Generation Do a Play or Write a Story'" A Life in ... Guardian News and Media, 22 Apr. 2016.

Shammas is renowned for his artistry in Hebrew, he is seen in Israel as the pure artist, who expresses his thoughts and demands through complex and atonal images. He rejects interviews, and instead only lets his art to speak on his behalf. While Shammas demands integration and recognition through the intellectual Israeli Jewish reader, Sayed Kashua, another 1948 Palestinian writer who writes in Hebrew only, reaches a complete different audience. Kashua's style is radically different from Shammas', he writes colloquially and does not seek elegancy in his writings. Kashua writes about events the way the naked eye depicts them. By doing that he manages to reach an impressively varied and wide audience that sways beyond the intellectual elite.

Arab Labor **- Sayed Kashua**

Sayed Kashua is a Palestinian Israeli Arab writer. He was born in Tira, an Arab village in the Israeli Triangle, to Muslim parents. At the age of 14 he left his town and went to Jerusalem to attend a boarding school for gifted students, "The Israel Arts and Science Academy". The school is predominantly Jewish, considering it was very rare for Arabs to attend the school at that time. Directly after high school he enrolled at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to study Sociology and Philosophy. Following his graduation from the Hebrew University, he secured a job at Kol Ha'ir Newspaper. First, he wrote magazine articles then he became a TV critic and had his own satirical column. Kashua is part of a new generation within the group of Arab authors who write in Hebrew. His voice is unusual within this group because he writes exclusively in Hebrew as a result of being educated within the Jewish school system. For Kashua, Hebrew is his form of expression as he claims: "To write in Arabic the way I speak it, which is the Palestinian-Israeli dialect, is not an option. Books must be written in literary Arabic, which I don't know well enough."[100]

In addition, Kashua published three successful novels. However, in contrast to his novelistic explorations, within Israel people know him mostly from Avoda Aravit (2007), or in English, *Arab Labor*. Arab Labor is a satirical bilingual TV series written by Kashua himself. Arab Labour colloquially signifies "shoddy or second-rate work"[101]. The series focuses on Amjad Alyean, a Palestinian journalist and Israeli citizen in search of his identity. Kashua satirizes the cultural divide by having his characters play with and thereby abrade against

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[100] . Neri Livne, "The Wandering Arab," *Ha'aretz*, 5 January 2004,

[101] "Arab Labor." Link TV. N.p.,

religious, cultural and political differences to daringly depict the mixed society that is in Israel. This show marked a milestone on Israeli television as the first program to present Palestinian characters speaking Arabic on primetime, and it generated unrelenting controversy between the Arab and Israeli media.

Kashua's works often feature events from his own personal life, or the lives of the people around him. It can be seen very clearly in his books and even more so in the TV show *Arab Labour*, where the protagonist, Amjad Alyean, is a Palestinian journalist that works at an Israeli newspaper illustrating the insertion of both Kashua's occupation as well as the kind of publications he worked for. In addition, Kashua's decision to move to West Jerusalem, to an all-Jewish apartment complex, and send his kids to Jewish Israeli schools, is incorporated into the protagonist's narrative underscoring the way in which the biographical content propels the narrative. When Kashua was asked for the source of the inspiration for *Arab Labor*, his reply confirmed these observations: "I'm in love with myself, it is not new that I use events and encounters from my personal life in order to describe the situation in Israel".[102] Kashua starred the role of himself in two of his four novels and his weekly column in the Haaretz Israeli newspaper. Although Kashua acknowledges his initial hesitation at the thought of "taking the risk and writing a bilingual show that has an Arab protagonist," it was the fact that Israeli society, saturated with a sense of entrenched racism, could handle "the additional solvent". It is noteworthy that Kashua's artistic endeavor was executed with an, arguably deliberate, reference to the "Melting Pot" wherein the dominant ingredient, that is the Israeli portion of the compound, simply assimilates and, by this process, subsumes minorities within its oppressive grasp. With

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[102] Bz, Itamar, "The Digestive System of the Average Israeli." *The7eye*. 2013. Web.

this incendiary agenda in mind, it begs the question whether this show would not only receive adequate funding but also the reception by the predominantly Israeli audience. It became increasingly clear that Kashua's risk was worthwhile.

There were multiple factors that played a role in the success of *Arab labor* despite its riskiness. Kashua explains that the reason behind the success of the show to bring Arab characters on prime time and to openly expose stereotypes is a combination between the intelligent regulation of dosages of softness and leveraging a permanent feeling of otherness and manipulative usage of stereotypes and contrasts. The non-stereotypical Arabism, helped to attract the Israeli public to the characters. That was the goal of the first season to humanise Arab characters and bring them to the center of the Israeli cultural salon. Kashua explains: "I don't know if I had aspirations beyond to try and humanise the Arabic family."[103] Another factor as to why the show was well perceived and massively viewed by Israelis on the width of the spectrum is because Kashua claims that he knows the limits of the discourse and that he exercised this awareness, as a journalist in Haaretz, to gauge the limits of the Israeli mainstream viewer's aesthetic appetite. He subsequently realizes that what he means by the 'mainstream' or 'average' Israeli viewer and their capacity to digest content refers exclusively to the left wing Israeli.

Kashua is often perceived in Israel as the different Arab, or, the 'modern' Arab. As a consequence, in his works, he attempts to portray Arab characters the way he conceives of them, and not in the way they are perceived in the Israeli public. Nevertheless, he has to be careful with the way he constructs his scenes to match what the Israeli viewer can absorb. To substantiate, when he brings up issues like Memorial Day and its significance to Amjad, as a Palestinian Israeli, he has to do it in a specific way. As Kashua puts it, a move as explained above requires

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[103] Ibid.

"calculated caution". [104] This is because, the Israeli public still struggles with identification with the meaning of the Nakba on prime time, since all expressions of sadness and mourning during Memorial and Independence Day are perceived as expressions of obliterating the Israeli state. Therefore, he has to present it in a crafted manner that would make the Nakba / Independence Day, for Amjad and his family painful and unfortunate, and simultaneously reach the Israeli viewer and transmit the message to him and make him watch the episode till the end even though he shivers at the sound of the term Nakba. Kashua's sketches require his viewers to not only participate in the dialogue but also *persist* through the dialogue.

In Arab Labor, Kashua deals with very important issues that shape life in Israel. It can be looked at as a form of social commentary on Israeli norms. For example, Kashua is highly opposed to the idea that people can only marry of their own religion. Intermarriage is an extremely sensitive matter in Israel not only between Arabs and Jews, but also between Arabs and Christians. In the show, Kashua introduces the story of a mixed couple which becomes the nucleus of the narrative. He follows their relationship, its evolution and the concomitant difficulties. The two characters are Amal and Meir; they are very different from one another. Amal is an Arab feminist - human rights lawyer who studied in the US, and moved back to Jerusalem afterwards. She strongly opposes the "Israeli government and its policies". Amal is juxtaposed with Meir, a Jewish Israeli who comes from a center-right wing family in Bat Yam. He is Amjad's coworker and best friend, he is a photographer, that claims not to care about politics. The two fall in love despite the impossibility of their circumstances. Even though they loved each other immensely, there was no way in which they could avoid the environment and reality surrounding them. Thus, the core of the majority of their fights and arguments derived

[104]Ibid.

from the fact that she was Arab and he was Jewish. However, it is Kashua's use of the artistic

space as a realm which allows for these cultural impossibilities to not only be conceived of but

also experienced vicariously by its viewers. These experiences engender discourse, which may

be limited to the realm of media, but allow for socio-historical issues between Arab Palestinians

and Jewish Israeli to surface. Furthermore, Kashua intertwines the history of the region with the

narratives of his characters so as to layer this fictional work with an air of meaningful

verisimilitude.

One of the most powerful scenes, which exemplifies the power of the dialogic space

within an artistic work, involves Meir and Amal in episode 8 of the second season: the episode of

Memorial Day. In this episode, Amal and Meir are broken up because of a political argument

that they had, and Meir is trying restore parity in their relationship. Meir follows Amal and waits

for her to leave her house to talk to her. She asks him to stop trying, because she feels that if she

is with him, it's not her "natural place," she tells him that there are things that go beyond

emotions, because they come from two different places. She tells him that their relationship does

not have hope, especially three days before the Nakba. Meir responds to her: "what do you

mean? Is it because of the Jewish-Arab issue? I don't care about this, I don't care about all these

politics, I don't care about the Nakba or 1948 or…" the siren for Memorial day rings, and Meir

goes silent and reflects. Amal looks him in the eyes and leaves. Meir stays, standing in silence,

commemorating the fallen Israeli soldiers. This demonstrates the manner in which each scene is

imbued with political themes which engender discourse that, whilst being conspicuously absent

from everyday discourse, must be grappled with by the viewers of the show. At the end of the

episode, circumstances shift, and Meir replaces Amjad who was asked to light the torch of

Independence at Mount Herzl. He takes this opportunity to express his love to Amal, because the

event is broadcasted all over Israel, and he was sure Amal would be watching.

In this scene, Kashua points out on the difficulty to mingle and cross cultures that exceeds politics and policy. It is a painful scene that tackles the fact of the inherent differences that the two nations were founded on. But at the same time he wants to find a solution for it. He doesn't want intermarriage to remain hypothetical and on the margins. He shows that while he is aware of the difficulty and the impossibility of the task, there can be a way to go around it. He uses the metaphor of Meir expressing his love to Amal on top of Mount Herzl, in front of the whole nation. The Arab and Israeli society is opposed to intermarriage. It is one of the biggest taboos in Israel, even if the household is not necessarily religious, when it comes to intermarriage, there is a red line. But when the viewer watches Amal and Meir, and follows their interaction and the development of their relationship, can't help but want them to end up together. As a consequence, this creates a gap between the viewer's desire as a distant observer, to his opinions and prejudices as a member of the Israeli society. This gap makes the viewer reevaluate his stances and his beliefs. This interaction with the viewer is what Kashua is working to achieve, because it enhances the dialogue and the two-way process of Palestinian Arab - Israeli interaction and push it to another level. This is because after watching the show, the Jewish Israeli becomes more informed of the situation of the Arab Israeli, and can have a more coherent correspondence with him, as the state's natural other. This scene is emblematic of Kashua's artistic vision which is undergirded by his broader political agenda: translating the paucity of socio-political discourse by producing a dialogue between artist and viewer which promotes engagement and raises awareness across the silent masses – allowing for dialogues about integration to be represented in the form of a narrative.

Sami Smooha sees Arab Labor as a TV show that functions as "delicate subversion"

under the status quo. He explains, the show is not trying to strengthen the stereotypes, he deconstructs the stereotypes, while Kashua is being attentive to the dosage and padding the TV screen, he allows the Israeli Jew to be more open and distinguish between an Arab Palestinians from inside the Green Line and outside the Green Line. The Jewish Israeli becomes more open to accept and hear out the Palestinian Israeli citizen and admit there is discrimination against him. The show presents the complexity of the process of Israelization that the Arabs go through. It presents the distortions of this process through a small dosage of Palestinization. The process of Palestinization doesn't appear that much in the show, because it is something that the Jewish Israeli viewer would distance himself from, so it is understandable why the show doesn't put an emphasis on the Palestinization process that Arab Israelis go through.[105]

Arabs in Israel have a complex identity with a Palestinian component, a pan-Arab component, a religious component and a civic Israeli component. Palestinization and Israelization are not necessarily contradictory. They can reinforce one another; the way it was with the younger generation of the Arab Israelis. The younger generation became more Palestinian in their self-identity and at the same time they went through a process of Israelization in terms of culture and their day to day life. Laurence Louer has said that: "[...] to identify oneself as a Palestinian is neither to reject Israeli citizenship nor to close oneself off culturally from Israel."[106] It is immensely challenging to have these two identities in Israel because it is a highly politicized and polarized society where Palestinian nationalism is greatly feared and rejected by Israeli Jews and the Israeli government. In 2013, MK Ayelet Shaked (The Jewish Home) proposed the "Law of Nationalism", which is the basic law that will pronounce Israel as the state of the Jewish people. In this law it is proposed that whoever identifies with Palestinian

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[105] Bz, Itamar, "The Digestive System of the Average Israeli." *The7eye*. 2013. Web.
[106] Louer, Laurence. To Be an Arab in Israel. London: Hurst, (2007): 199.

organizations or movements that don't recognize the right to the state of Israel to exist, would be convicted. According to this law, holding the Palestinian flag in public is also a crime. This law prevents Palestinians from integrating in Israel without fully divorcing the Palestinian component from their identity.

An in-depth look into the contours of Amjad Alyean, in light of "the Law of Nationalism," underlines Kashoua's politicization of his protagonist who exemplifies the complexity of the question of identity for the Palestinian Arab in Israel. Amjad, the protagonist is a Palestinian Arab Israeli citizen who tries desperately to get close to the world of Israelis, meaning, the Jewish Israelis. He loves the holidays of the Jews and is very much influenced by the actions of the Jews, their lifestyle and their day to day decisions. He aspires for his daughter, Maya, to be just like the Jewish kids, so he decides to send her to a Jewish school in Jerusalem. Amjad is the most extreme character in the show. He is very extreme in wanting to resemble the Ashkenazi Jew, therefore, very extreme in wanting to distance himself from his Arabness. Most of the stereotypes are passed through his persona. He presents the stereotype that Arabs have problems with water and can't swim, and that Arabs can't play classical music, and that Arabs are afraid of dogs because dogs don't like Arabs. Kashua, in this instance, uses the self mockery as a rhetorical tool. These scenes are supposed to make fun of Amjad, but in reality it makes fun of the viewer that believes these stereotypes, and the satire appears very clear in these places. In an article about the sitcom wrote Mendelson Maoz and Steir-Livny, Hebrew Literature professors, shed light on the Jewification process undergone by the show's leading character, Amjad. They analyze a range of surreal scenes depicting Amjad's pathetic attempts to be a part of the Jewish world, but which repeatedly prove "the impossible situation of an Arab in Israel,

belonging to two worlds while simultaneously being shunned from both."[107] While the rules of this particular television genre dictate a humorous presentation of this vexing problem, the researchers show that themes relating to the fate of the Jewish people, also appear in Kashua's literary works, shaped in a tragic way

Moving from Kashua and Shammas, the next artist this paper is going to explore is Lucy Aharish. A news presenter, reporter and a television host. Aharish is also an Arab citizen of Israel, but unlike Shammas and Kashua, she doesn't call herself Palestinian, even though her grandparents experienced the Nakba to its fullest. She says: "I have a country, and I have a passport. When I am abroad, I say I am Israeli."[108]

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[107] Shaping Israeli-Arab Identity in Hebrew Words—The Case of Sayed Kashua Author(s): Batya Shimony Source: Israel Studies, 18.1 (2013): 150.

[108] Ferber, Alona. "No Apologies: Lucy Aharish Is Honored to Be Both Arab and Israeli on Independence Day." Haaretz.com. N.p., 21 Apr. 2015.

Lucy Aharish

Lucy Aharish, was born in Dimona, a Jewish desert town in Israel's periphery, located in the south of Israel. Her parents are originally from Nazareth, they moved to Dimona as a result of her dad's work. Aharish studied social sciences and theater at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. After that, she studied journalism at the Koteret School in Tel Aviv and then interned for a year and a half at a school in Germany. In 2007, she became the first Arab to present the news on mainstream Israeli television when she was hired by Channel 10[109]. As *The National* describes her in an article published in 2009:"Aharish was the bright new female on the block and one of the key players in a circle of young Arab-Israelis blazing a trail into Jewish salons through TV sets, movie screens and glossy magazines."[110]

One of the most significant events in Aharish's life and professional career was the lighting of one of the beacons on Independence Day at Mount Herzl: the burial place of the man who envisioned Israel and became the nightmare of the Palestinians, not far from the ruins of the Palestinian Arab village of Deir Yassin and the apartheid separation wall. This event generated serious dispute within the Palestinian Arab community in Israel, because the Israeli Day of Independence is the Palestinian Nakba, where the Palestinians mourn and commemorate the loss of their land and loved ones. The Palestinians considered Lucy's participation in such event as shameful. There were also voices from the Israeli right wing who claim that as an Arab, Aharish is not sufficiently loyal to the state and she shouldn't have been given this honor. These extremist right wing groups led by Benzi Gopstein, a follower of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, is

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[109] Shabi, Rachel. "Lucy Aharish: 'People Don't Imagine I'm an Arab'." *The National*. N.p., 11 July 2009.
[110] Ibid.

the head of Lehava, a "nut-job"[111] organization that seeks to prevent assimilation, protested Aharish's lighting of the torch all around Israel.[112] Aharish was nominated to be one of the lighters of the torch as a reward for her promoting of "social pluralism and positions that call for coexistence in the country." Gideon Levy's commentary about Aharish's participation of the event was as such: "In the eyes of the Zionist establishment, Aharish is a good Arab. It turns out that in our enlightened state, a good Arab is an invisible Arab, when it comes to his identity. Why was Aharish chosen? Because she – how shall we put it – does not look Arab, sound Arab or dress like an Arab. The "coexistence" of the establishment that chose her is actually "uniexistence," everyone in its image." [113] This was a transformational event in Aharish's career. She was highly appreciated by most Israeli Jews and highly condemned by most Arabs in Israel and Palestine.

The question of being a "good Arab" is problematized by the Israeli regime's policies towards its citizens which are often contradictory. This is because on the one hand, it is claiming that it's aiming to create a "new, local, Israeli Arab identity divorced from Palestinian nationalism" so this new Arab will be able to fit into the Israeli society and be good citizens. On the other hand, the Arabs are not really given a platform to serve as good citizens, because they are always looked at as a fifth column and a possible threat. As long as this attitude is sustained, the discriminatory acts against Arabs in Israel are going to remain justifiable. Sammy Smooha aptly articulates the issue as follows:

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[111] Sharir, Moran. "Mad as Hell: When the Arab News Anchor Couldn't Take It Anymore." Haaretz. N.p., 08 July 2014. Web

[112] Ferber, Alona. "No Apologies: Lucy Aharish Is Honored to Be Both Arab and Israeli on Independence Day." Haaretz.com. N.p., 21 Apr. 2015.

[113] Levy, Gideon. "In Israel, a Good Arab Is an Invisible Arab." Haaretz.com. N.p., 11 Mar. 2015.

A "good citizen" contributes to the state far beyond observing law and order, paying taxes, serving in the military, voting in elections, and engaging in routine public life. In terms of the fulfillment of these obligations of an ordinary citizen, there is no substantive difference between Jew and Arab, with the exception of military service. However, the Israeli "good citizen" not only excels in various voluntary activities, but also in contributing to state goals, including the strengthening of national security, the increase of the Jewish majority, the cultivation of the Hebrew language, the development of Jewish culture, the ingathering of the exiles, the settlement of the country (by Jews), the geographical dispersion of the (Jewish) population, the reinforcement of the relations with Diaspora Jewry, and the advancement of economic independence. The possibility that an Israeli Arab could become a "good citizen" is thus extremely limited; as much as one may try, by the very fact of being an Arab, having Arab children, using the Arabic language, and sustaining the Arab culture, one is prevented from contributing to the realization of most of the Jewish objectives of the state.[114]

Growing up in Dimona, a city typically known for its right wing leanings, had major effects on Aharish's life. She went to a Jewish school where she was the only Arab in the class. "In high school I was often teased and sometimes even beaten up," Aharish confesses in an interview.[115] One time there was graffiti scrawled on to her school's toilet wall: "We don't want filthy Arabs in our school." On the other hand, in almost every interview at the beginning of her growing presence in the media, Aharish never failed to miss an opportunity to narrate her experience of surviving a Palestinian "suicide bombing" during a visit with her family to Gaza when she was 10 years old. Moreover, she consistently emphasized the negative impact it left on her. In most interviews, Aharish refers to this incident as surviving a suicide bomber's attack; in other interviews she refers to it as surviving a Molotov Cocktail attack. Aharish makes sure to share her traumatic experience with the Palestinians in the occupied territories to pass the message to the Israeli public that she, as an Israeli Arab, feels their pain and fear of Palestinians. The proceedings of this event were even broadcasted as Aharish was walking to light the beacon of Independence Day in a bizarre case of simultaneous propaganda and the commemoration of Aharish's narrative.

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[114] Smooha, Sammy. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype.*" Israel Studies* 2.2 (1997): 220.

[115] Rozen, Emmanuel. "*Unrecognized*". Arab Israeli Women. *Mako*, 2011.

In order for Aharish to reach a level or a space where she can talk comfortably about her opinions, she had to win the credibility of her audience first. She had to present herself as the "good Arab", as Gideon Levy, a left wing Israeli journalist who has a weekly column in Haaretz newspaper defined the term :"The deal is obvious: If you act like Jews, talk like them and think like them, you will be considered good Arabs, and maybe even Israelis. Because that is how we want you to be – like us. Not like the Zoabis. In other words, you are better off assimilating."[116]Aharish being a 'good Arab', doesn't think that Arabs in Israel are discriminated against, and if at all, no more than the discrimination of the Ethiopian and Mizrahi Jews. She claims that the Arabs are not victims of systematic injustice.[117] She had to show the average Israeli viewer that she is standing on the same side. As Rogel Alpher, a journalist who writes for Haaretz newspaper, put it in his article *The Tragedy of Lucy Aharish, Israel's Neutralized Arab Talk-show Host: "*Aharish talks like an Israeli centrist, somewhere between the Zionist Union's Isaac Herzog and Yesh Atid's Yair Lapid. In other words, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has to stop inciting and the Palestinians have to stop stabbing. All this started because of the tensions over the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount without any link to the Palestinians' despair."[118]

Aharish is admired by a vast majority of the Israeli public for a number of reasons: she has a charismatic character and is articulate. However, the most important factor that plays into this admiration might be a little less apparent, and it is that she is a tool that calms and salves the Jewish Israeli consciousness. The mere fact of providing her with a platform to speak functions

[116] Levy, Gideon. "In Israel, a Good Arab Is an Invisible Arab." *Haaretz*. N.p., 11 Mar. 2015.

[117] Alpher, Rogel. "The Tragedy of Lucy Aharish, Israel's Neutralized Arab Talk-show Host." *Haaretz*. N.p., 23 Oct. 2015.

[118]Ibid.

as their required share that they have to contribute in order to preserve their self-representation as democratic by allowing for open discourse with a spokesperson ostensibly representing the marginalized minority, therefore, advocating for a two-way process; a process undermined by the fact that the voices of the other are not only chosen by the Israelis but also only speak to perpetuate the dominant narrative within the "Melting Pot". Aharish's case is a win-win situation for the mainstream Israeli public. Thus, by furthering their narrative, she validates and reinforces the prevalent Israeli doctrine as the representative of the minority. Aharish sees that "she's the one who truly represents the silent majority of Israeli Arabs — she, not the MKs elected to represent them." [119] Jack Khoury, an Arab journalist who writes for Haaretz claims that: "broadcaster Lucy Aharish has become the joker the Israeli media pull out of the deck to attack Israeli Arab MKs and other voices deemed 'extremist.'"[120] This is because Aharish is an Arab who isn't afraid to express an opinion that is inconsistent with the voice of the Arab street, particularly that of the political leadership. Khoury sees that the Israeli mainstream perceives the phenomena of Aharish as such: "We have a popular senior broadcaster who can represent a different, sane, and pleasing position, and show the face of Israeli democracy. MKs Ahmed Tibi or Haneen Zoabi, not the Communists and not the Islamic State. Lucy Aharish is a loyal citizen who is not ungrateful. And we are all citizens of the State of Israel, loyal to its citizens, Jews and Arabs alike. An island of sanity and democracy in the Middle East. A villa in the jungle."[121]

Aharish blends in seamlessly at Channel 2; she has the qualities that make her qualified to fit in. She is fluent in Hebrew and has no accent, she feels very comfortable around Jews; she

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[119] Alpher, Rogel. "The Tragedy of Lucy Aharish, Israel's Neutralized Arab Talk-show Host." *Haaretz*. N.p., 23 Oct. 2015.
[120] Khoury, Jack. "Those Arabs the Israeli Media Loves to Love." Haaretz.com. N.p., 19 Oct. 2015.
[121] Ibid.

talks like them and has similar sense of humor. However, her moderation can also be seen as her tragedy. This is because it is very easy to complain about her in newspapers like Haaretz. But she doesn't have a choice, because if she wants a career in Israeli TV, she doesn't have the luxury of appearing differently. Some will argue that if Aharish didn't express these views, she wouldn't have been able to host a current-affairs program on Channel 2. Alpher echoes this and says:" It's not as if Aharish has a choice. There's no maneuver room in the range of expression she has been awarded. If she underwent a transformation that had her expressing militant nationalist Palestinian views, she'd be fired on the spot." Aharish is somewhat aware of that, she once expressed that in an interview saying :""when I was the nice Arab girl that read the news and said good evening everyone, two Qassam rockets just landed in Sderot, then said have a good night with a polite smile on my face, this was okay. But the moment I started expressing my opinions, here apparently I cross the lines."[122]

There was a shift in Aharish's language when talking about the Arab population throughout the course of her career. In a documentary that was made in 2013, the time where Aharish starting getting recognition in the Israeli media and culture, featured the story of five Israeli Arab women. The common denominator between them is that they are all struggling to fit in the Israeli and the Arab society. Aharish's part of this documentary evolved around the lingering question pertaining to her own as well as her two sisters marital status. Aharish's parents do not approve of their daughters marrying a man that is not Muslim. Aharish and her sisters are very much uncomfortable with this fact, because they think that if they marry a Muslim man, they will end up giving up the personality and character that they built, because according to them, all Muslim men are oppressive and won't let their wives be independent or

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[122] Rozen, Emmanuel. "*Unrecognized*". Arab Israeli Women. *Mako*, 2011.

pursue a career. In this documentary, Aharish constantly makes generalizations about the Arab society in Israel as a whole and the character of the Arab Muslim man in particular. Later on, in Aharish's current career, she condemns the people who make generalizations about Arabs.

Aharish had a different way than Shammas and Kashua in presenting herself in the Israeli media. Shammas and Kashua, through their work, demanded integration as their first demand and desire. Though Aharish, while maybe aspiring the same end, took a different approach. She choose to assimilate first and prove herself as a "good Arab" so later on she can demand integration. So even though when she started appearing first on TV, she won the titles of being the first Arab broadcasting on Israeli TV, she was only being assimilative, and fulfilling her duty just like any other Israeli Jewish journalist would. Without bringing the Arab component of her identity to the screen, and if at all, it would be to condemn it. Many critics used the term "pet Arab" to describe her. Thus, in this phase of Aharish's career, she was merely part of the existing Israeli monologic discourse, because she was echoing what has already been said and not contributing a new voice to the conversation.

Conclusion

The Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel have gone through a number of different stages in their position and function in the Israeli state throughout history. They transitioned from being silent and silenced during the period of "political quietism," where they were afraid to express their Palestinian identity, to a socio-political stance where they demanded to be recognized as a national minority with collective rights. This voice of dissent persists even today. The "1948 Palestinians" became active Israeli citizens and they remain dissatisfied with their status as second-class citizens which is the rationale underlying their call to equality in relation to the Israeli Jews. Even though the Israeli state has programs to promote the integration of the Arab minority into the state's sphere, this paper has demonstrated how integration in Israel is monologic and therefore purely assimilative. The redefinition of integration into a two-way process is crucial for not only the beginning of the process but also to frame the dialogues that are characteristic of the process of peacemaking in the region.

The two-way process requires these two societies in question to work together in order to preserve each 'compound' in the solution of the society which further illustrates the failure of the "Melting Pot" especially with regard to the reoriented definition of integration put forth in this paper. The scheme of the dialogue does not mean that the two sides, Arab Palestinian Israelis and Jewish Israelis, have to reach a full agreement on the entirety of disputes they share revolving around the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Unfortunately, after 69 years since the start of the conflict, it is still very early to talk about any sort of conclusive agreement. A socio-political consensus cannot be reached without both sides first recognizing each other, and more importantly acknowledging the suffering and history of the other. The dialogic relationship between reader/spectator and author, manifest in Shammas, Kashua and Aharish's methodology,

humanizes the Arab Palestinian population in Israel by illustrating the narratives of the socio-politically oppressed national minority.

Shammas achieves this by provoking the definition of Israeliness through writing and demanding a share in the Hebrew language. Shammas used the Hebrew language as it was his own. This form of Hebrew has a Palestinian influence at its core and simultaneously grapples with biblical allusions and appropriations from in fact, early European Hebrew writings that were the modus that anticipated the establishment of the state of Israel. Shammas claims that he, as a Palestinian Arab and Israeli citizen, is as righteous as any other Jewish Hebrew speaker to claim the Hebrew language as his own. By doing that, he introduces the Israeli Hebrew readers to the Palestinian history and story in their own idiom and naturally enforces the Palestinian narrative in the Israeli artistic arena. The establishment of the artistic space engenders the re-understanding of integration as a two-way process which is mirrored in the interaction between reader and writer.

Kashua, also a Hebrew writer, works to achieve the dialogic encounter in a different manner. In Israel, he is portrayed as the man of the people and then the artist. In *Arab Labor,* he managed to attract great numbers of Palestinian Israelis and Jewish Israelis to not only be witness but to also engage with the story of an Arab family in Israel. By bringing the Arabic language to the commercial Israeli TV, this shift from a monologic space, dominated by Hebrew, becomes dialogic due to the introduction of the Arabic language which is an official language in Israel, despite the fact that it is often blatantly negated and disregarded.[123]

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[123] "Is Arabic Truly an Official Language in Israel?" +972 Magazine.

Aharish, assumed a distinctive position in bringing the "good Arab" into the center of the Israeli media. Aharish, following suit, demanded a platform to contain her own and other similar voices into the Israeli cultural sphere. She successfully managed to capture the attention of the Israeli public who openly recognized her as an Arab Israeli, with an emphasis on the Israeli facet of her identity. Aharish created her public persona whilst divorcing herself completely from the Arab Palestinian identity. She, unlike Shammas or Kashua, embarked upon a path, to secure dialogic integration, by adulterating her endeavor evident in the assimilationist guide under which she rose to popularity.

This paper advocates for the creation of artistic spaces which are dialogic in nature. These spaces, which allow for the voice of the marginalized Arab Palestinian minority to surface, portray the polarization and entrenched hypocrisy, considering Israel's self-representation as a democracy, across the Arab and Jewish populations. It is noteworthy that these artistic spaces permeate throughout both Arabic-Palestinian and Hebrew-Israeli culture which underlines the importance of the dialogue between the two communities emerging in this space. Nevertheless, the language of expression, as exemplified by the artists chosen in this paper, remains in the language of the dominant narrative, Hebrew. The paper's methodology, which composes a triptych of artistic voices, reflects the need for a transposal of the dialogic artistic space into both the political processes that will underlie the integration of the Arab Palestinians but also, and fundamentally, the redefinition of a two-way process of integration that requires listening, dialogue and exchange in order to challenge the socio-political status quo. It is indispensable to note that it is not agreement that is the primary goal of this artistic and, by extension, political enterprise; it is the movement away from diplomatic dialogue to a space where open-dialogue is inspired by the principles which have redefined the notion of integration itself: a two-way

process where the socio-political condition hinges upon dialogue, rather than the reiteration of monologues whose echoes continue to haunt the forthcoming generations of this region. The voices of discontent and frustration, if not confronted by dialogic processes, will sentence the Arab Palestinian Israelis to subsist with the Israeli regime's tyranny which seals their ineluctable fate.

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