

# Apples from the desert



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Apples from the Desert What are some perspectives about Israeli society that the seems to highlight? That is, what are some things with which you are perhaps not so well acquainted, but as a reader may make you curious about the society and culture of Israel as presented by Savyon Liebrecht? Savyon Liebrecht highlighted experiences regarding marriage, divorce, mother - daughter relationships, daughter of concentration camp survivors, among others.

In " A Married Woman", the author presented the irony of a Hannah Rabinsky, woman married to Moshe, a man known as a womanizer, an alcoholic, and a gambler, and later stressed that the " marriage wasn't really a marriage". Due to her Pnina's (daughter's) prodding and her love for her mother and hatred for her father, a divorce ensued between her parents. What is strange here, and made me curious if this really happens in Israel, is the fact that despite the divorce, the man remained in the house of mother and daughter - with Hannah continuing to support the needs of the man she divorced.

In " Hayuta's Engagement Party", Bella, the mother of Hayuta, is a daughter of a concentration camp survivor, Grandpa Mendel. The horror and trauma that Grandpa Mendel experienced during the war remained hidden in his heart for a long time, until six years ago. The impending wedding of Hayuta was feared to be another venue for Grandpa Medel's expression of Holocaust stories. The family's efforts to silence him created tensions between the older generations and the new generations of Israelites. What is striking in this story is that despite the probable embarrassment that Grandpa Medel could create during the party, the family recognized the importance of his presence in an occasion like this. They are willing to go through all the

trouble of trying to silence him against all odds.

In " Apples from the Desert", Victoria, the mother of a rebellious daughter, only recognizes the depths of her own marital misery when she sees the loving relationship Rivka has formed outside the legal bonds of matrimony. This story presented that older generations still believed and practiced arranged marriages without knowing the desperate consequences both man and woman experience during their married life. This is a sad plight if, indeed, it still happens in Israel today.

2-What issues in the stories seem universal, that is, could they mirror similar or notion that they may be found in our society and culture in the U. S.? Can one make such comparisons? Why or why not?

The universal issues eminent in the stories are: (1) the unconditional love that a mother has for the child (or daughter, specifically) in her stories; (2) the value one gives to one's family and (3) the option of divorce for unhappy marriages.

These issues are considered universal because they encompass people from all cultures. Definitely, there might be differences in details but the underlying concepts remain the same - either in Israel, in the US, or in other countries of the world. I believe that the love that a mother has for her child is always universal and unconditional. Despite any wrongdoings, a mother's love does not falter. These can be seen in Apples from the Desert, Hayuta's Engagement Party, and A Married Woman.

The value of family relationships is also universal; although the extent of closeness and degree of affiliations differ depending on cultural influences. Asians, for example have extended family relationships where interrelationships are acknowledged laterally and horizontally. In the West,

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the nuclear family is given the most importance.

The third issue that mirrors universality is the concept of divorce. Despite the difference in culture, both Israel and the US opted to end unhappy marriages through divorce. The difference lies in practices and living arrangements after the divorce process. In the West, divorce means severance of all ties. Joint properties and living arrangements are drastically changed. However, as presented in "A Married Woman", divorce did not alter living arrangements or the system of support. It just severed the marriage bonds. For some culture, this arrangement is not feasible or acceptable. But still, in other predominantly Catholic cultures, divorce is really not an option.

#### Work Cited

Liebrecht, S. (1986). Apples from the Desert. The Feminist Press. New York.

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