

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF ARABIC-HEBREW TRANSLATIONS IN THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARAB CULTURE  
IN THE EYES OF THE JEWISH READER FROM 1931 TO 1993

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This study examines Arabic works that were translated into Hebrew between 1931, when the first modern Arabic novel was translated into Hebrew, and 1993, when the Oslo accords were signed. I study the characterization of the Arab and his culture in the translation of long narratives, novels and novellas. The translational work shall be divided into three phases; each phase shall be determined in accordance with the appearance of innovative translations that present new translational norms.

The first phase begins with the appearance of the first Hebrew translation of the Egyptian novel *The Days* by Taha Hussein in 1931 and continues for about four decades. Since these translations were all colored by Zionist ideology, their approach tends to be Orientalist, portraying Arabic culture as backward, Other, and inferior. In some of the works, the original text shows sympathy for Western culture and even an attempt to collaborate with it. At the same time no novels and novellas by Palestinians authors are translated, as this culture was intentionally ignored.

The second phase begins in the mid-1970s and continues for about a decade, with the translation of the Palestinian novel *The Sabar* by Sahar Khalifeh (translated into English as 'Wild Thorns') at the outset. This novel deals with the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank following the Israeli occupation in 1967. The publication of this translation shows some acknowledgement of the Palestinian suffering under the Israeli occupation. This is an intermediate period as it paves the way for changes that took place in the Hebrew translation of Arabic works during the 1980s.

The third phase begins in 1984 as *The Pessoptimist* by Emil Habibi is translated into Hebrew. This period is characterized by openness and the penetration of marginal voices into Hebrew literature. Works expressing the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 war, which challenge the Zionist consensus, are translated.