

Translators and Culture Transfer: English Translations of Palestinian Novels*

Author: Ula Al-Dabbagh
Petra University

Abstract

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Palestinians have gone through a number of harrowing experiences. These experiences have been depicted in Palestinian novels, characterized by copious reference to culture-specific manifestations peculiar to the Palestinian community. Since the transfer of culture is of paramount importance in literary translation, emphasizing culture-specific connotations in Palestinian novels is likely to cause translation problems in the act of reworking these texts from Arabic into English. This entails that the translators undertaking this challenging translation task must have a thoroughgoing command of the culture that produced the original work to secure the production of target texts that can successfully introduce the 'foreign' culture to English readers. This paper tries to investigate whether the translators' cultural background, and hence familiarity with the source language culture, affects the strategies that these translators employ in overcoming the cultural mismatches encountered in rendering Palestinian novels from Arabic into English. To conduct this study, the strategies used in transferring the cultural manifestations in the three Palestinian novels, namely *I Saw Ramallah*, *Wild Thorns* and *A Lake Beyond the Wind*, rendered into English by translators that have different cultural backgrounds, are analysed and discussed.

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